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The Week

UNHAPPY China is again threatened with civil war on an extremely serious scale. Chiang Kai-shek, who now dominates the Nationalist government, is at odds with Feng Yu-hsiang, and hostilities seem likely to begin at any moment. The Nationalists are handicapped by lack of funds, and there is danger that if Feng makes a good beginning in his campaign, some local military leaders will go over to his side. At present the defenders of Canton are Nationalists, while the Kwangsi forces which have been attacking that city are presumably in sympathy with Feng. Chiang Kai-shek also has the sympathy of Chang Hsueh-liang, the ruler of Manchuria. While Chiang is hardly a hero by western standards, it is to be hoped that he will be able to defeat Feng if a clash in the field should come. The Nationalist movement, in spite of all its difficulties, is still China's best hope for peace and orderly progress.

IRVINE L. Lenroot is an ex-Senator, a lame duck from Wisconsin since the primaries of 1926. In accordance with the custom, in both political parties, of looking after those who fall by the wayside, President Hoover recently nominated him to be a United States Customs Judge. The Senate confirmed the nomination, but it did so in secret executive session. Shortly thereafter, the United Press furnished to the newspapers which subscribe to its service a complete record of the vote on the Lenroot confirmation. The same thing happened some time ago in connection with the secret vote on Roy O. West, and the Senators this time were even more indignant than before. The Rules Committee decided that Paul R. Mallon, chief of the Washington Bureau of the United Press, should be barred from the floor of the Senate, although representatives of the press associations have been permitted this privilege for half a century. Thereupon Senator La Follette, seconded by Senator Johnson of California, who is opposed to secret sessions, succeeded in having the representatives of the other associations excluded as well. The ruling is, of course, one which is of no tangible importance. It merely makes the work of the newspaper men slightly more difficult without in the least degree curtailing their ability to get information, confidential or otherwise, from the Senators, whenever they want it.

THE incident has again called attention to the Senate's bad habit of going into executive session when it is about to do something of which it is ashamed. It is not required by law to use such sessions, and the argument that a sensitive nominee should be spared the public discussion of his qualifications is one that will not bear examination. For one thing, if there are important facts about him which tend to make his confirmation undesirable, the country has a right to know it; and for another, if a man is so thin-skinned that he cannot bear a little blunt speaking, that fact is in itself to some extent a disqualification for public office. That these excuses are not important is shown by the fact that the Senate does not invariably resort to secrecy. Such sessions ought to be abolished, and we

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hope that the agitation created by the news beat of the United Press will hasten the day.

WHEN Secretary Jardine before the presidential election advised farmers to hold their wheat for better prices, he temporarily helped to stay the downward trend, and doubtless did something for Republican success. But how weakly supported his confidence of a better price in the future was, may be seen from the effect of the immense North American carry-over in reducing it to the neighborhood of one dollar. Why should the Secretary of Agriculture not have been able to foresee such a result? Was he depending on blind luck such as might have resulted from Republican weather and a low yield from winter wheat? Or did he just not care, so long as Mr. Hoover should be elected? Now the administration has been making haste to move the crop instead of keeping it on the farms, by inducing the railroads to lower their grain rates. This could avail little except to improve the competitive situation in foreign markets of our wheat raisers as opposed to the Canadian. But even in this respect the effect was promptly canceled, as might have been expected, by a corresponding reduction of rates by the Canadian roads. The wheat growers have a better case than ever for relief. What will they say if Congress, while refusing to pass the debenture, raises the tariff on what they have to buy? Will they forget it in 1932? Perhaps they will, if prices happen to be high. But perhaps the Republicans will bet too often on good luck.

MR. HOOVER has made two appointments during the past week, one of which was as good as the other was bad. In choosing Joseph P. Cotton to be under-Secretary of State, he brings into the public service a man of conspicuous abilities and liberal outlook, who may be counted upon to reinforce the efforts of Colonel Stimson for just and progressive administration. The selection of Col. Theodore Roosevelt for Governor of Porto Rico is, however, a horse of a much darker hue. Colonel Roosevelt is a well meaning young man, but when you have said that he deserves credit for desiring to serve the country in public office, you have exhausted the category of his praises. During the oil scandals of the Harding regime, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, he showed himself painfully ignorant of what was going on in his own department, under his own nose; and no other aspect of his career contains anything to counteract this impression. In appointing him, Mr. Hoover pays a Republican party debt in a way to which we had hoped he was superior.

NOW THAT the labor progressives have met, formulated their program, and declared their intentions, and now that Matthew Woll has defended the American Federation of Labor against their criticism, the real test of the argument is at hand. It is one that cannot be tried by charges and countercharges. The very terms of the progressives' indictment against the officials of the Federation are, in their most important sections, based upon the failure of these officials to procure the results which both sides say they want—that is, more widespread sharing of our prosperity, more complete union organization, shorter hours, more coöperation, better protection against old age, higher enthusiasm in the rank and file. The only competent answer to the criticism is to achieve the ends in question. The only solid support of the criticism is for the progressive group to demonstrate their ability to do likewise. If this two-headed effort can spend itself in an effective and friendly rivalry, all will be well. But if it leads merely to a political struggle within the existing ranks of organized labor, the cause which both have at heart can only be injured.

THE strike of the textile workers at Elizabethton, Tenn., has been settled on terms which constitute a temporary victory for the management, but an ultimate one for the workers. True, the latter will continue to toil long hours for wages which in many cases are only $11 or $12 a week, but the management agrees to suspend its practice of dismissing those who engage in union activities, and to assign a reason whenever anyone is discharged. The employees are also to have a grievance committee which will consult with the management about the improvement of working conditions. There is no doubt that the terms on which the mills have been reopened constitute a decided gain for unionism; and in the long run, this is the most important factor. Without the union, any temporary victory in regard to conditions of work might have been destroyed as soon as the management again felt strong enough; with the union, it is safe to predict that the improvement in conditions will not be long delayed.

HOW SPECULATION has achieved the upper hand over investment in the stock market may be seen from the violent fluctuation incident to the scare over the raising of the rediscount rate. When the Federal Reserve Advisory Council recommended a higher rate whenever the Reserve Banks should ask for it, prices took one of the biggest tumbles in history. When, in spite of the rumored request of both the New York and the Chicago banks, the Federal Reserve Board, by a close vote, failed to grant the higher rate, prices bounced up again. This activity shows the extent to which those who are now buying and selling stocks are relying upon credit for their operations, and what importance they attach to short-run changes in the credit situation. If, as some optimists have declared, the market were being sustained chiefly by those who have bought stocks with their own cash and are holding them as long-term investments, such a nervous flurry over bank rates could scarcely have happened.

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AT LEAST a dozen correspondents of The New Republic have suggested that the dreadful tragedy in Dr. Crile's hospital in Cleveland was a foretaste of what may be expected when aeroplanes begin dropping poison-gas bombs on cities in the fashion lately described by Mr. Stuart Chase in "The Two-Hour War." This, of course, is only very partially true. Terrible as was the Cleveland catastrophe, it was nothing at all compared to what may be expected if hostile aeroplanes ever fly over big cities. Instead of one building in which people are being killed, we may expect a hundred. Whereas all Cleveland instantly came to the rescue of the victims, in war-time the catastrophe would be so great that the facilities for rescue would probably be overwhelmed. Those in the Crile hospital who managed to get to the streets had a good chance of surviving; but aerial bombardment would leave the streets less safe than the interiors of the buildings.

Is There Hope for the City?

FOR A LONG time earnest individuals have been trying to do something to make New York City habitable. When tenement congestion years ago became unendurable, laws were passed establishing minimum standards for the new housing to be put up. Tiny bits of land were reclaimed at great cost for playgrounds and parks. When the restless population movement shoved people too far from their work, elevated and subway lines were built. And when these became overcrowded, more were constructed, at still greater expense. Streets jammed with vehicles were widened; traffic regulations became more and more complex. Engineers went far afield for water sources; bridges were erected; railroads built new terminals and new tracks. But every attempted remedy brought its own nemesis. The tenement-house laws did not destroy the old rookeries, now inhabited after thirty years by a considerable fraction of the city's population; and they did not render it any easier for decent new housing to be erected, in view of the high land-values of the congested sections. Transit lines merely encouraged the building of huge office piles at one end and shoddy real-estate development at the other, until the lines again became jammed to capacity at rush hours. Traffic improvements only enabled more vehicles to traverse the streets arduously, unsafely and at a snail's pace. More terminals brought more commuters and more freight. The city has been like an overgrown puppy chasing its own tail; it has never been able to catch up with itself.

The difficulty of the learning process has rarely been better illustrated than by the fact that new proposals of the same sort are constantly being heard. Someone wants double-decked or triple-decked streets; someone else wants new subway lines; a third proposes additional bridges; meanwhile still higher skyscrapers are being projected, and the suburban-lot developers are constantly busy. Is there no escape from the magic ring that clamps discomfort on the city? If there is, it can only be through a view which sees all sides of the difficulty at once, and leads to comprehensive action.

Such an attempt is the Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs, the result of seven years' work by experts, carried out at a cost of over a million dollars contributed by the Russell Sage Foundation. The scope of the work has surely been broad enough to enable a much better judgment than has ever before been attempted of what might be done. It covers an area in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut as large as all of the latter state, including 421 separate communities lying within forty to fifty miles of the New York City Hall. It looks ahead to 1965 and a predicted population for the area of about 20,000,000 souls. It projects expenditures, public and private, which if all carried out will cost many billions of dollars. If an effort of this sort cannot offer hope for real living comfort in a great city, there is none.

The physical basis for hope, we are assured, exists. There is enough utilizable vacant space in the area so that 20,000,000 persons might live there much better than 10,000,000 do now. There is three times as much land as would be required for all ordinary purposes by double the present population; some of it might well be used even for farming instead of for badly conceived real-estate developments. The real trouble is not overcrowding on all the land, but misuse of it so that overcrowding occurs in some spots, and waste in others. But the task is not, in one sense, nearly as easy as it would have been if we were starting on virgin soil which had never yet seen a Wall Street, a Henry Street, a Grand Central or a Broadway. It is much cheaper and otherwise more feasible to plan properly for new regions than to reconstruct old ones. Even to provide for the needs created by the present population will, the survey estimates, take $3,000,000,000. Unless a new direction is taken at once and new abuses prevented rather than allowed to arise only to be cured, the penalties of neglect will be overpowering.

The central purpose of the plan is to distribute the population more thinly over a wider area, and to put places of work, stores and recreation facilities closer to the dwellings so that traffic congestion will be diminished. This ideal cannot, of course, be perfectly realized in view of the tremendous start which centralization has achieved, but it may be aided. Once you have given some impetus to a better distribution, you may take steps to provide traffic relief for the existing centers without so much fear that it will merely add to crowding.

The details of the plan are overwhelming in their complexity, and cannot be enumerated in any brief comment. They include, of course, provision for new express highways, commuter transit, railroad trunk line and terminal service, airports, bridges, tunnels, boulevards, parks and parkways. So far as

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one can see by a superficial inspection, there is a radical difference between the facilities here suggested and the others which have come into being in the past in a piecemeal fashion. They are planned in relation to each other, and with a view ahead instead of a backward look. They are so arranged that everything need not be taken into the center of population and out again. Through freight, through passengers and through automobiles would go round instead of in, and need not be trans-shipped. This means a whole series of belt lines—tracks and highways. By similar means, the several suburbs would be directly connected with each other for local traffic. Commuting trains, instead of coming to full stops in the city and jamming up terminals, would pass through, distributing their passengers on the way, and go on to another suburban district from which they could start the return journey. Parks and roads would be extended where land can still be bought cheaply, but care would be taken not only to make some roads large enough for heavy traffic, but to make many others too small for anything but the use of dwellers in houses. The spots chosen for residence communities would not solely be those from which there is easy access to Manhattan, but also those close to districts with facilities for modern industrial or business development.

The planning experts are doubtless correct in saying that on account of vested economic interests and habits, some compromise with existent but unfavorable conditions is necessary. The question is, however, whether the compromise which will be necessary may prove to be fatal. In spite of all arrangements for better utilization of outlying regions, will not their growth make the center so much the more valuable for business purposes? Will not this accession of land values again lead to the erection of too many skyscrapers in a given locality, in order to crowd more rental income out of a given number of square feet of ground surface? And will not the radial lines of travel which reach them become all the more over-laden? The report does not advise limiting the heights of buildings, but points out that the essential thing is to proportion the surrounding open space appropriately to the height. How is this to be done, in spite of existing legal obstacles and the high cost of city land? It can scarcely be effected to an extent sufficient to prevent renewed concentration of working populations in too small an area. The report passes over the question of adequate sources of water supply and sewer outlets for so huge a population. May not these become limiting factors, both physically and economically? And it lays down no broad scheme of zoning or building restriction for the region, pointing out that these functions belong to local governments. But our experience with such measures shows that too often they are adopted tardily and give way before the pressure of profit-seeking interests when they are most needed for the long-time security of good living conditions. It may prove, after all, that, even with the best of planning, a city like New York has already passed the point where its growth can be controlled—at least without measures covering a much wider area.

The bearing of such doubts, however, is not to lessen the value of planning, but to emphasize its necessity at earlier stages of development and on a still grander scale. Cities which have not yet reached the size and the difficulties of a great metropolis would do well to learn from the cost and the uncertainty of this attempt. They should turn their attention from the desire for mere bigness which while it may make values in limited areas grow for the benefit of special interests, contains the seeds of confusion, and ask rather what will most aid the average man and woman, the pursuit of a whole some life, the search for beauty. Regions should begin to look far ahead before they ever become metropolitan. The states and even the nation ought to begin to plan, in order to curb in their youth those wild horses of private gain which often become destructive of social values. Plans costing millions to prepare and billions to effectuate are magnificent gestures, but in our admiration of this splendid modernity we should not overlook their old and homely meaning—that in this matter, especially, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Misrepresenting Haiti

ON MAY 10, the State Department released for publication the annual report of the High Commissioner to Haiti. It is a roseate document—full of self-eulogies. Judged by the canons of "prosperity," the American occupation is making progress. Thus the Haitian government closed the year with a surplus of $1,888,620. Exports were nearly double those for the previous period; there was a favorable trade balance of $2,418,989. A banner year! A different story is told, however, by the Monthly Bulletin of the Financial Adviser of Haiti for this March. This report states that customs revenue declined 17 percent in December, 1928, as compared with the previous year; 19 percent in January, 1929, 37 percent in February, and 44 percent in March. In the latter month, foreign trade fell off 35 percent. Apparently the reason for this marked decline is that the coffee crop is the smallest in seven years.

How can the Financial Adviser picture such a lugubrious scene, when the High Commissioner brags of prosperity? The explanation is that the High Commissioner's annual report is for the period ending September 30, 1928, eight months ago! Nevertheless, the report was not written until January 3, 1929, when revenues already had begun to decline. And if the High Commissioner wished to paint a really honest picture he might at least have mentioned this recent slump, in a footnote. To make the misrepresentation worse, the State Department withheld publication of the report five

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months after it was written. What is its purpose in now publishing a document which the American public naturally assumes to be a survey of current conditions, when, in fact, it has already become ancient history?

Equally serious is the misrepresentation of the political situation. The elections of January 10, 1928, at which certain constitutional amendments were adopted, are mentioned, and General Russell, the High Commissioner, solemnly declares that these elections "were probably the quietest that ever obtained in any country." Quite true; but he does not add that the calm was due to the suppression of the opposition by President Borno. The American occupation actually allowed pro-Borno voters to be transported to the polls in United States army trucks! These amendments extended the term of President Borno to six years. They also authorized the chief executive to remove judges now in office, and to appoint new ones. The result of this will certainly be to destroy the independence of the Haitian judiciary, which in the past has attempted to obstruct illegal acts, not only of President Borno but also of the American authorities. The constitutional amendments likewise authorized the suppression of freedom of the press and the impairment of the jury system. Haitian editors who have antagonized the president serve periodic terms of imprisonment. Last year Borno closed the well known *Cercle Bellevue,* a social club, on the ground that its members sympathized with certain editors who had been jailed, and the order of the president closing the club was served by United States army officers.

The United States has loudly proclaimed its belief in constitutional government and in fair elections for the Caribbean countries. Yet in the outstanding area under its control—Haiti—it has been an accomplice to unfair elections and to the suppression of political liberties. As long as President Borno obeys our wishes in matters as to which we have an interest, we will not only keep him in power but will allow him to rule his subjects with an iron hand. It is as dishonest to say that we cannot control President Borno's acts as it is to say that we occupied Haiti at the voluntary request of the Haitian people.

Although Haiti is supposedly an independent state, a member of the League of Nations and the Pan-American Union, and has a nominal president and cabinet, this black "republic" is actually ruled by the United States. We intervened in Haiti at a time of grave disorder, and we secured the "right" to take over the administration of most of the affairs of this country through a treaty which we forced the Haitian government to sign in 1915. Today we maintain in Haiti a High Commissioner, taken out of the Marine Corps, and five treaty officials in charge of finance, the Haitian guard, public works, and the agricultural and medical departments. Altogether, about a hundred American officials are in the island, together with about 500 Marines. As a result of fourteen years' effort, the American occupation has restored order, cleaned up finance, stopped graft, given the peasant a feeling of security, and developed a commendable system of public health and agricultural education.

But is the occupation teaching the Haitians how to govern themselves? In theory, the American treaty officials are advisers to Haitian cabinet officers. But it is practically the universal testimony of competent observers that, instead of teaching Haitians the art of self-administration, these treaty officials and their subordinates have concentrated in their own hands the smaller details of government. The Haitian minister of finance has no discretion in regard to the collection or disbursement of revenues; Americans and not Haitians are customs collectors, even in the more obscure ports.

Probably the most serious mistake of the occupation is that, while it has cultivated the peasant classes, it has antagonized the Haitian élite, the educated Negroes outside the government. In most countries the opposition may air its political views through the medium of a legislature, but the Haitian parliament has not met since the early days of the occupation. Since then the Haitian intellectuals, some of whom are more intelligent than most of the Americans in the island, have lived a cowed and sullen existence. It is true that they represent only a minority, but until the services of this minority are enlisted, no Haitian government can hope to stand on its own feet.

The fact of the matter is that the United States has governed Haiti by a military psychology, which is the antithesis of the democratic psychology. There is no need to discuss whether the appointment of General Russell as High Commissioner was originally wise, but it seems clear that his usefulness has come to an end. The sooner he is replaced by a civilian High Commissioner and the sooner the brigade of American Marines is withdrawn, the better for the Haitian people and for the United States. The American people should demand that the United States evacuate Haiti when the present treaty expires in 1936. What is more important, they should demand that the State Department immediately install in Haiti a system which will really give the Haitians an opportunity to learn self-government by practice. A year ago last April, President Borno announced that the Haitian legislature would be restored in 1930. American opinion should see to it that this promise is kept, and that every effort is made to win the sympathies of the Haitian leaders who have been antagonized. We should not be misled by those who predict revolution if we withdraw from Haiti in 1936. We withdrew from Santo Domingo in 1924 and no revolution took place. The United States has no right to exact impossible guarantees from the Haitian people. No one can say whether or not the Haitians will be able to govern themselves until they have been given a real and untrammelled opportunity.

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The Cost of Medical Care

IT HAS been a good many centuries since the importance of *mens sana in corpore sano* was first recognized; but only within the past few years have the people of the United States, the richest and almost healthiest country in history, come to realize the enormous financial burden which it imposes—or rather, which is imposed by a departure from that standard. Public welfare workers have at last come to realize that they are faced with a three-cornered problem in social economics, which so far has proved incapable of solution. They have found that the cost of illness, especially illness from long-continued, incapacitating diseases or those involving serious operations, has become so great as to involve the financial ruin of many families so afflicted, or, indeed, so prohibitive as to render proper medical care impossible. They have also found that the average professional earnings of physicians and surgeons in the United States are too low to offer a proper return for the elaborate education and training necessary to attain and maintain that high professional efficiency which is demanded at the present time, while there are large areas, especially in the rural districts of backward states, where insufficient support for medical practitioners, either because of the poverty and ignorance of the people or the sparseness of the population, or both, make proper medical attention unavailable, without respect to its cost.

This is admittedly a difficult problem, yet upon its solution depend vast humanitarian as well as economic interests. The humanitarian element is probably the more important, yet the economic factor is also of immense significance. The direct, realizable monetary loss due to illness in the United States is probably between six and seven billion dollars annually, and it is also probable that at least half of this loss could be prevented by a proper application of known preventives. Dr. Homer Folks, Secretary of the State Charities Aid of New York, in a paper presented to the International Conference of Social Work in Paris, last July, estimated the annual direct expenditures for illness in the United States at nearly four billions, to which must be added about $700,000,000, the cost of medicines and similar supplies. He also estimated that the loss of future net earnings on account of premature deaths, due to illness, is twelve billion dollars a year. Discounting all such estimates of a theoretical sort, there still remains an immense realizable sum which is lost each year in preventable illness and death. So important has this matter become that some time ago a "Committee on the Cost of Medical Care" was organized by prominent medical practitioners, public-health authorities, economists and representatives of institutions interested in this work, under the presidency of Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, President of Stanford University, and at present Secretary of the Interior at Washington. This committee established an office in Washington, and has entered upon a five-year program of investigation and research.

Medical practitioners admit that there is much in the present rules governing their profession which needs reform. As Secretary Wilbur said in a recent address: "What other business does free work as a part of its regular program? What other business has a sliding scale of charges varying from $25 to $10,000 for the same service?" And again, it is asked, "When a man earns eight dollars a day ($2,400 a year if he works continuously) and is supporting a family of five, how will he pay for medical service if his wife requires a goiter operation and he himself has a 'spell of rheumatism' in a single year? No wonder the great mass of people of moderate means who desire to pay for what they get, be it food, clothing, or medical service—this great group of substantial, self-respecting citizens constituting 75 percent to 90 percent of the population, are beginning to complain."

Yet in spite of high charges made in certain cases, the average physician in the United States, as we have suggested, is inadequately supported. Dr. Folks, in the paper above referred to, estimates that the average *gross* income of regular medical practitioners at the present time is not over $5,000 a year, out of which must come the expenses of office and equipment. Inasmuch as these practitioners have spent years of study and an average of at least $10,000 upon their education, the return seems hardly adequate.

Then comes the matter of the adequacy of medical service. A recent report states that in a certain county of North Carolina having a population of 18,000 there are only four physicians capable of active practice. There is no hospital in this county. There are dozens of other counties, in the states embracing the Appalachian and Blue Ridge Mountains, where conditions are as bad or worse, and in the sparsely settled districts of some of the western states and New England, similar conditions exist. On the other hand, most of the larger cities are overflowing with practiceless doctors. Much of this maladjustment of distribution of medical personnel is due to the unwillingness of younger practitioners to go into general practice in country districts. They wait, hope and struggle for the evanescent lucrative practice of the great cities.

Yet even in the cities, where there are thousands of more or less idle medical practitioners and abundant hospital facilities, a large proportion of the population goes without adequate medical attention. In the Mulberry district of New York, for example, where all possible medical attention is available, it was found in a recent canvass that 16 percent of the persons confined to their homes on account of illness and 22 percent of those too ill to be at work obtained no medical care from a physician. Statistics show that 15 percent of the 2,400,000 births each year in the United States are attended by midwives instead of by physicians—

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which helps to explain our high infant mortality. Much of this maladjustment of medical personnel could be remedied by regulations, either set up by the profession itself, or otherwise, controlling the establishment of new practitioners in a community. In various European countries, new practitioners are not permitted, either by the ethics of the profession, or by municipal regulation, to enter into practice in communities which are already properly served. The application of some such rule in the United States might serve to drive the unemployed city doctor to the rural districts.

There remains the important problem of the cost of medical care and the proper distribution of this cost. Says Dr. Olin West of Chicago, Secretary of the American Medical Association: "The one great outstanding problem before the medical profession today is that involved in the delivery of adequate, scientific, medical service to all the people, rich and poor, at a cost which can reasonably be met by them in their respective stations in life." The more difficult phase is the high cost of major operations, and of cases of unusually long illness. With some adjustment of the present system of medical care, it seems probable that the ordinary run of illness could be cared for as at present and the expense borne, as now, by the individuals and families concerned. In more serious illnesses, especially those cases involving major surgical attention, it is evident that the present system is inadequate. The most obvious remedy for the present situation would seem to be some sort of sickness insurance, but there are many difficulties. There is, in the first place, no adequate body of data on which such a system of insurance can be based. No one knows what the rate of morbidity in the United States really is, or what it ought to be. And what about preventable diseases? There are seven hundred thousand cases of malaria in the United States each year, although malaria can be prevented. Until communities, families, and individuals which permit the existence of such diseases can be induced, by education or otherwise, to take proper precautions, any system of insurance manifestly would bear unfairly upon others. Several of the larger insurance companies have done a certain amount of business in insurance against sickness, but as a result of the lack of definite data on which to base actuarial tables, and because of the large element of malingering among the insured, and the expense of placing policies and collecting premiums, the rates have been high and the service of doubtful value. Any system of insurance which does not include compulsory features would be imperfect and unsatisfactory, while any system of compulsory insurance, like those maintained in various European countries, would impinge upon our beloved individualism. Moreover, no system of insurance would do away with the present losses due to preventable disease.

It has often been remarked that this problem is of slight importance to the very rich, who are able to pay for medical care and attention whatever the cost may be, or the very poor, who take advantage of the free clinics and hospital service. It is the great mass of the people, who wish to pay for what they receive, who resent charity and prefer to suffer in silence, albeit at stupendous loss to themselves and to the nation in the aggregate, for whom the present state of things is rapidly becoming intolerable. It is increasingly plain that, both by reason of its immense social significance and the economic losses involved, the subject will demand governmental interference. In the meantime, several of the great life insurance companies, and notably the Metropolitan, of New York, have done much in the way of preliminary investigation and have adopted the scheme of offering a certain amount of medical attention and supervision to their policy-holders in various parts of the country where adequate medical service is lacking. Aside from the public benefit conferred, they have found the plan profitable. Several large industrial concerns have also adopted the policy of furnishing medical service to their employees and in some cases to employees' families. The Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company, for example, whose 16,000 employees constitute a large portion of the population of one city and two towns in the state of New York, has established a medical center, in which employees and their families are given complete medical attention, except unusually elaborate dentistry, and certain operations. The company has not only found that this is profitable, but that complete medical service can be afforded a community at a cost far below that of the individual system.

The subject is one of such importance that a comprehensive canvass of the situation is imperative, and is a work of such magnitude that it must of necessity be governmental in character. Certainly, an investigation adequate to form a basis for remedial action, governmental or otherwise, is far beyond the powers of the Wilbur committee, however meritorious the work of this committee may be. Both from the economic and the social and humanitarian point of view, it is imperative that steps be taken to stop the enormous waste of life and substance which present conditions entail.

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After the O'Fallon Decision

THE MOST remarkable feature of the decision by the Supreme Court of the O'Fallon case is the uncertainty in which it leaves the law concerning the valuation of public utilities, despite the tremendous effort of all the participants to obtain a clear statement of just what the law is. On the day when the opinion was handed down, President Hoover appointed the National Law Enforcement Commission headed by former Attorney-General Wickersham, who argued the O'Fallon case in behalf of the United States. Mr. Wickersham might well suggest to his colleagues that one of the difficulties in enforcing the law often arises from grave doubt as to what it is.

For many years the Interstate Commerce Commission has been engaged in valuing the properties of the railroads, under the mandate of an Act of Congress requiring the Commission to give "due consideration to all the elements of value recognized by the law of the land for rate-making purposes." This provision was properly interpreted by the Commission to mean—as the Supreme Court now holds in the O'Fallon opinion—that the Commission should "consider" all the "elements of value" described in the celebrated opinion of the Supreme Court in Smyth *vs.* Ames, a case decided in 1898. According to this opinion, "the original cost of construction . . . the present as compared with the original cost of construction," and many other factors, "are all matters for consideration, and are to be given such weight as may be just and right in each case."

Ignoring the minor factors, the critical issue presented to the Interstate Commerce Commission in valuing railroad properties under this "law of valuation" has been: What relative weight should be given to the inconsistent factors of "original cost" and "present construction" cost? It is impossible to ascertain either the "actual" original cost of the railroads or what it would "actually" cost to construct them today; and estimates must be used.

If the Commission should give dominant weight to estimates of original cost, it might find that today the railroads had a "value" of $23,000,000,000 or less; but, on giving dominant weight to estimates of reproduction cost, the "value" of the same properties today might be fixed at $35,000,000,000 or more. Under the law, twelve billion dollars added to the rate-base valuation would authorize adding about seven hundred million dollars annually to transportation rates.

Facing this problem, a majority of the Commission determined, in the O'Fallon case, not only to exercise their best judgment as to the relative weight to be given to estimates of original cost and reproduction cost, but also to express their reasoning so clearly that the Supreme Court might either approve their weighting of the valuation scales, or state what weights would be "just and right." In brief, what the Commission did was candidly to give dominant weight to its estimates of the original cost of the O'Fallon properties, although it expressly allowed the "present value" of lands and fixed a final "value" which was over $32,000 higher than a maximum original-cost estimate (after due allowance for physical depreciation). The effort of the Commission to explain why it regarded the weight which it gave to the various "elements of value" as "just and right" is described in the majority opinion of the Supreme Court by Mr. Justice McReynolds as follows:

> The report of the Commission is long and argumentative. Much of it is devoted to general observations relative to the method and purpose of making valuations; many objections are urged to doctrine approved by us; and the superiority of another view is stoutly asserted. It carefully refrains from stating that any consideration whatever was given to present or reproduction costs in estimating the value of the carrier's property.

Mr. Justice Stone, in his separate dissent, takes direct issue with the statement last quoted and says:

> That the Commission gave consideration to present reproduction costs appears not only from its own statement, but from the fact that it gave full effect to increased current market values in determining the value of land and to additions and betterments since June 30, 1914, taken at their cost less depreciation.

To harmonize these conflicting statements one would be inclined to interpret the majority opinion as a holding that insufficient weight had been given to reproduction costs. But Mr. Justice McReynolds explicitly negatives this interpretation when he writes as follows:

> The question on which the Commission divided is this: When seeking to ascertain the value of railroad property for recapture purposes, must it give consideration to current, or reproduction, costs? The weight to be accorded thereto is not the matter before us. No doubt there are some, perhaps many, railroads the ultimate value of which should be placed far below the sum necessary for reproduction.

Perhaps the clearest view of the doctrine announced by the majority can be obtained in reading the exhaustive dissenting opinion of Mr. Justice Brandeis—in which Mr. Justice Holmes and Mr. Justice Stone joined. This opinion, while upholding the action of the Commission, asserts that the "Commission is required by the rule of Smyth

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vs. Ames, reaffirmed in the Southwestern Bell case, to determine the rate base under Section 15-a by actual value as distinguished from prudent investment."

It is then pointed out that the Commission must therefore consider all those factors which affect "actual value," such as "the commercial and the legal limitations upon rates . . . the effect of competition upon the volume of traffic . . . efficiency of the plant . . . functional deterioration" . . . and other factors that cause a "lessening of service value," such as, "changes in the volume or character of its traffic" . . . or "progress in the art of rail transportation," causing obsolescence in equipment, roadway, shops, terminal facilities. All these factors, it is pointed out, may "more than counterbalance that increase in its actual value which would otherwise flow from the rise in the price level since 1914." Therefore, the dissenting justices conclude that "only the then service value of the property is of legal significance under the rule of Smyth *vs.* Ames."

It is the conclusion of Mr. Justice Brandeis (and his concurring colleagues) that a finding of "actual value" annually for each of the railroads of the United States through detailed consideration of all the appropriate factors "would be a stupendous task, involving perhaps prohibitive expense." But it is suggested that the Commission through its general knowledge of transportation conditions and special knowledge of an individual railroad, such as the O'Fallon, might properly be permitted "the exercise of its judgment upon all the evidence, including enhanced reproduction costs." Because, the opinion concludes, we are dealing "with a legislative question which can be more easily determined by a commission composed of persons whose special skill, observation and experience qualifies them to so handle great problems of transportation as to do justice both to the public and to those whose money has been used to construct and maintain highways for the convenience and benefit of the people."

It may be difficult for a lawyer who argued in support of the order of the Commission which is now reversed by the Supreme Court to give an unbiased view of the results. But, in truth, no one can do more than guess at what may follow. The majority opinion states that "in the exercise of its proper function this court has declared the law of the land concerning valuations for rate-making purposes." This law is that "such weight as may be just and right in each case" shall be given to a large number of variable, uncertain and inconsistent factors which must be weighted according to unknown ratios. If the minority interpretation of the majority opinion is correct, it appears that, when the Interstate Commerce Commission has properly appraised the "actual value" of the railroads, the results will practically defy analysis. Perhaps this will render them immune to judicial reversal, if it is made evident that the Commission has sought with conscientious purpose and indefatigable energy to consider and weigh every factor showing the "actual value" of the existing properties. Just how the Commission can revalue every railroad annually according to this method is, however, not clear.

In this situation there are certain opportunities for legislative action that might be helpful to protect the public interest. It is possible that further definite instructions to the Commission as to what weight should be given to original and reproduction costs might be upheld by the Supreme Court as reasonable additions to the "law of the land." But it is also possible that such legislative action might be regarded as an invasion of the "proper function" of the court.

It is, however, quite evident that both the "actual value" of railroad properties and the rates which railroads may seek to charge depend considerably on the cost of substitute transportation services. Thus the development of competitive transportation by water, by air and by actually "public" highways, under the fostering care of state and national legislatures, may serve as an effective regulator of railroad rates, even though direct regulation by the Interstate Commerce Commission may be retarded or even nullified by the impossibility of establishing and maintaining a stable and reasonable rate base.

It also seems clear that legislative wisdom would dictate an early effort to revise the rate-regulating provisions of the Transportation Act of 1920, which, after nine years of experimentation, have been definitely shown to be unworkable. Finally, it has been made evident that consolidations of railroads into larger units of still greater "actual value" (which would provide the basis for increased rates) should not be encouraged unless accompanied by additional safeguards of the public interest in reasonable rates. The acceptance of a fair valuation of the consolidated properties, as a future rate-base, could properly be required as a condition of permission to consolidate. DONALD R. RICHBERG.

Pride

He often cursed the failing word
That tried to save him, and could not.
When he was threatened on the flank
He bared his shoulder to the shot
And let them take him, feet and all—
But not his pride, that would not fall.

It grew so secret and so sore
That he was nakedness within;
Though day by day he clothed himself
With an indifferent cold skin,
And got the name of being good
Because he yielded where he stood.

So he let the lady go
And got the name of being fair.
He only fought his rival's smile
With an incurious despair;
And lost her then; but the desire
Runs through him yet like heated wire.

MARK VAN DOREN.

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Censoring the Talkies

IN THE days when every motion-picture dawn flickered over a pink mountain top, the guardians of our morals had an easy time of it. All a film censor needed then was a tape-measure and shears. His duties were to limit the display of baby clothes before the little stranger arrived and to keep the final clinch short enough to prevent any doubts concerning the purity of the cow-girl in the divided skirt who, at the end of reel two, rode with her lover into the sunset.

But, alas, just when Clara Bow's legs, Alice White's lingerie, and Adolphe Menjou's Parisian subtleties seemed to present all the problems the harassed censor could possibly cope with, the movies recently put infancy behind and began to prattle more or less intelligibly. As a result, both censors and producers are looking old beyond their years; and there is no doubt that we are entering an era when the official censor of Pennsylvania, the burly trooper in rural New York, and the club ladies of Zenith, will determine not only what it is sinful for us to see, but also what it is sinful for us to hear.

The boards of censors have already assumed that they have authority to pass on the talking part of motion pictures. The chairman of the Pennsylvania Board of Censors stated recently that the President of the United States has no right to deliver a speech through the talking movies in that state without the board's approval. A recent decision of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, upholding the board in a case appealed by the Fox Film Corporation to test the board's right to censor the spoken lines of the film, "She's Still My Baby," indicates that the chairman's notion of his power is hardly exaggerated.

A similar case is now before the courts in New York, initiated by Pathé. This company refused to submit the spoken part of its picture, "Sal of Singapore," and applied for a permanent injunction to restrain the censors from interfering with showings of the film. While awaiting the decision of the courts, the company has released "Sal," spoken lines and all, under a temporary restraining injunction.

In most cases the policy of the film companies has been to submit spoken lines under protest. According to attorneys, there seems to be little chance that censorship of the talkies can be blocked by court action. The censors are too firm in the saddle and have too tight a grip on the reins. In Memphis, Tennessee, some time ago, a censor ordered deleted certain parts of "The King of Kings," although the picture had been endorsed by hundreds of clergymen and received with loud hosannas by churchgoers all over the country. The theater management appealed to the circuit court. The judge listened to testimony, decided that the picture was neither lewd, inimical, indecent, nor hurtful to public morals, and allowed it to be shown. Through various appeals, the case finally came before the Tennessee Supreme Court. The court decided that the circuit court had had no business to pass upon the picture and that there is no appeal from a censor's decision.

"Hope of relief from censorship seems to lie rather with the legislature than with the courts" is the way one attorney puts it; but this prospect will scarcely dishearten a good Baptist who makes his living by his nose for what's Right and what's Wrong in the movies. There are now censorship laws in eight states: New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Kansas, Minnesota, Maryland, and Florida. Censorship is also provided for in some thirty municipalities. In Ohio and Pennsylvania, bills have recently been introduced to increase the fees for censors and to provide equipment necessary for pre-viewing talking pictures. A similar bill has been prepared in Maryland. New censorship laws have been introduced this year in Connecticut, Nebraska, and Oregon, which will provide for censorship of talking, as well as silent, films. Another such bill has been prepared in New Jersey.

The producers, naturally enough, are more than alarmed by these signs that, with the coming of "sound" into the industry, the censors will grow more dictatorial and censorship itself will spread. The unlucky producers are on the verge of panic. But at least they have kept their wits enough to stiffen their campaign against the whole notion of censorship, while Will Hays is trying to stave off the blue-nosed pack with fine speeches.

"The organized industry," says Mr. Hays, "shall continue to carry on in the most essential elements of the whole matter and that is to make certain that its pictures are of such quality that no reasonable person can claim there is any need for censorship."

From the thick of the battle, producers call attention to the fact that fifty-four miles of film are released every week. No board of censors is large enough to review 10 percent of this output. The bulk of it comes before politically appointed sub-censors. Most of these sub-censors are young girls, or well meaning elderly ladies with political pull, or men so incompetent that they are willing to accept small pay. Reports of the censorship commission of the state of New York, a body that shows more discrimination in its own decisions, perhaps, than any other censoring group in the United States, show that state troopers have been used as sub-censors and have ordered deletions in news and educational films.

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The producers, however, are more immediately affected, and, therefore, more upset, by the confused censorship in relation to talking productions. They would feel more comfortable under the most rigid censorship than under the present uncertainty. Their chief worry is not that there are words they may never use, and others that may be declared sinful in Ohio and pure in New York, but that at present they cannot find out which words these are. Their problem is complicated by the fact that the mechanical difficulties involved in deleting from a talkie are so great that no picture can pass through many such operations and ever be quite the same again. One can scarcely take away any actor's lines and leave him to face his public, his lips twitching as if in a sudden attack of laryngitis. Entire continuities essential to plot development must often be rearranged, or entirely eliminated, because the writer who prepared the dialogue failed to find the *mot juste*. Still the producer must produce, knowing that after some good Methodist has passed his film, the hotsy-totsy Follies girl, who whispers blandishments to her boy-friend, may appear even dumber than he has made her.

There are few precedents to guide the worried magnate in choosing what his stars may, or may not, say. He might, perhaps, study the decisions of the Pennsylvania board concerning the Robert Benchley talkie, "The Sex Life of the Polyp." You will see what enlightenment he would get:

> BENCHLEY: If you will remember, at our last lecture we took up the subject of "Emotional Crises in Sponge Life," and we saw how wonderfully Nature takes care of the thousand and one things a sponge must think of before it can reproduce other sponges, and vice-versa.
>
> CENSORS: Eliminate "before it can reproduce other sponges, and vice-versa."
>
> BENCHLEY: The entire courtship is carried on with an open space between the male and female of perhaps fifty paces (polyp measure), which in a way makes it difficult for the male to be anything more than just a pal.
>
> CENSORS: Eliminate entire sentence.
>
> BENCHLEY: The male has a rather unusual way of attracting the attention of the opposite sex (female). It was Dr. Rasmussen who discovered that the male, during the courting season, (the courting season opens on the tenth of March and extends through the following February, leaving about ten days for general overhauling and repairs)—during the courting season. . . .
>
> CENSORS: Eliminate "leaving about ten days for general overhauling and repairs."
>
> BENCHLEY: We took away the original female for whose benefit he was frantically flashing his gleamer and substituted in her place another but less attractive female.
>
> CENSORS: Eliminate "for whose benefit he was frantically flashing his gleamer."

In "The Singing Fool," the Pennsylvania censors ordered "You got as much business writing songs as a bow-legged girl on a stepladder" changed to "You got as much business writing songs as a bow-legged girl in short skirts."

The New York censors ordered the word "broad" out of "The Barker," and demanded that "You're a liar" be changed to "That's a lie." From the film "In Old Arizona," they ordered cut: "Poor Tonia, what a bad road she travels. The pitcher that goes to the fountain too often soon breaks."

Despite these definite decisions, it must be admitted that the producers are still pretty much at a loss. Among those in the know, there are rumors of a test talking picture, daring enough to arouse controversy and determine, within some degree of exactitude, what may and may not be said. Why not use "What Price Glory"? Or, if it is feared that the censors' order in such a case would be merely, "Eliminate all sound," the producers might try "Hamlet."

The chairman of the Pennsylvania board to the contrary, the Springfield Republican recently stated in an editorial, "Advance censorship of a motion picture with sound accessories is one thing; advance censorship of the simple picture of an orator delivering an address is another." The American Civil Liberties Union views this particular aspect of the controversy as "a new angle of the fight for free speech."

In the past, of course, the censors have ordered deletions in news and educational films almost as freely as in purely entertainment pictures. Recently, for instance, a news reel was banned in Pennsylvania because it contained scenes of a Labor Day parade. The board interpreted the film as a violation of its ruling that scenes of industrial conflict shall not be allowed to reach the screen. The board also refused to license films showing relief work among the striking miners.

In their fight against this phase of censorship, the producers have pointed out, apparently to no effect, that the newspapers maintained their right to print details of the Peaches-Browning affair, publishing pictures of the Rolls-Royce car, the Tulip Garden on the roof, the bandaged face of Peaches and the pet gander; that they also published the gruesome details of the Hall-Mills murder case with pictures of Willie Stevens and the old apple tree, and the details of the Gray-Snyder affair, even to the final picture showing Ruth Snyder strapped in the electric chair.

The movie producers proudly point out that, at the time of these events, concerning which not one foot of film was released, they were photographing and showing 477,000 feet of film about Lindbergh, thousands upon thousands of feet connected with the exploits of Commander Byrd, the fliers from Germany and Ireland, and the sacrificial mission of Floyd Bennett.

It is too early, of course, to tell how far the censors will go in gagging the talking news film. There is no doubt that the producers themselves will con-

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tinue to use considerable discretion in their choice of subjects. For my own part, I know that, although I have listened to Mussolini, I have not yet had a chance to hear Stalin. It is safe to predict that some time, unless warned in advance, I may have to sit through an address by the head of the National Security League in order to be on hand to hear the panting of Greta Garbo in the super-production, "Is Sex All?" But will the little lady ever be preceded on the program by Clarence Darrow? I doubt it.

TRAVERSE CLEMENTS.

Gurdjieff

One of the most interesting developments of modern times in the realm of philosophic ideas is the system expounded by M. Gurdjieff, with which many Americans have become familiar through the work of Mr. A. R. Orage. The following article by Mr. Zigrosser makes no attempt to explain the Gurdjieff philosophy, but gives a vivid picture of a visit to the Gurdjieff Institute, at Fontainebleau, near Paris, and a personal sketch of its head.

WHEN I visited the Gurdjieff Institute at Fontainebleau for the first time, one gray and showery June Sunday morning, I was taken out into the garden to meet Mr. Gurdjieff, who was strolling there with an old Russian friend. As they approached me, Mr. Gurdjieff was walking with a slow, firm step, his hands behind his back: I saw a man of medium height but powerful build, swarthy complexion and piercing black eyes. He was dressed in almost shabby clothes, a rusty black overcoat, and a slouch hat, all of which he wore with indifference to ordinary standards of fashion. He thus presented a deceptively undistinguished appearance. In contrast, I remember how impressive he looked in oriental clothes, in an old painting by Mr. Salzman which I saw later. I also have another, and still more vivid, impression of Mr. Gurdjieff sitting cross-legged in his Turkish bath and wrapped in an enormous white towel, which set off the swarthiness of his face.

When we came near, he opened the conversation by saying, "I smell American." I had been prepared for this sort of greeting by the reports of previous visitors, so I was not as startled as I might have been. He went on to explain in his curious English: "You no take bath here last night; I smell American smell." After some conversation he asked if I could drink. When I replied that I hoped I could, he invited me to sit beside him at dinner—a place which I learned later was reserved for those who drank. He laughed and added that he liked three kinds of people; those who could drink, those who could tell stories—and the third he would tell me about some other time. A few minutes later, he left us and went to his room.

While waiting for dinner I explored the grounds with Mr. de Hartmann, a brilliant musician who has been associated with Mr. Gurdjieff for many years. The Chateau and the grounds had the lovely, quiet charm of old French country places. This one had been left practically unchanged since the seventeenth century, when Madame Maintenon, among others, is supposed to have lived in it, and when it was remodelled with royal funds. The house consisted of a central building with a wing on either side, and a rambling addition containing the kitchen, stable, and former servants' quarters. The main building—called "the Ritz" by those at the Institute—faced a sloping lawn, laid out with gravel paths and a fountain, and said to have been designed by Le Nôtre.

Mr. de Hartmann and I came back in time for dinner, which was served to about six or seven older members of the community in the main dining-room. The meal was much like those that I later discovered were served on feast-days or other special occasions, beginning with platters of hors-d'œuvres, potato and other mixed salads, smoked fish, onion tops and other herbs, eaten by hand, such as mint, fennel, parsley, tarragon, and exotic plants that have no English names. These herbs were always on the table at the Institute. The soup was followed by Russian meat cakes, and a rhubarb compote. At other times, *kasha* or the Armenian *madzoon* was served as dessert. Occasionally a whole sheep's head was cooked as a delicacy, and served by Mr. Gurdjieff to his guests with smiling reflections on the foolishness of a civilization which allowed him to buy such a morsel for a couple of francs. Some kind of spirits, either Vieux Marc or Armagnac, was usually passed around. There was a ritual for the drinking of this brandy: seven rounds were served, each with a toast, to which everyone was expected to drain his glass. The toasts seldom varied from the following order: (1) To the health of all idiots; (2) To the ordinary idiot; (3) To the candidate for idiocy; (4) To the superidiot; (5) To the archidiot; (6) To the hopeless idiot; (7) To the compassionate idiot.

I once asked him why he always toasted idiots, why he did not invoke a benevolent power in his toasts, such as Beëlzebub, for instance. He answered that he sometimes did, but that he never could venture—and here his tone assumed the

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greatest reverence—to drink to Beëlzebub himself. "To the tip of his tail, yes, or his hoofs, or his horns, maybe—but never to the great being himself." And he showed me the chair that Beëlzebub always sat in when he visited him, pointing out that there was room for him to curl up his tail comfortably, and so on.

As we rose from the table, Mr. Gurdjieff asked me whether I was full "like American man or like donkey." When I answered, "Like donkey," he replied: "Much better to be full like donkey than like American man. Americans have weak stomachs. European man ruined by his head, American man ruined by his stomach." Then we went up to his room for coffee and a liqueur.

Toward evening I was invited to go to Paris with Mr. Gurdjieff. He, Mr. de Hartmann, Mr. Salzman, and I, got into his car and we were off, Mr. Gurdjieff at the wheel. He took a special route to show me the beauties of the forest of Fontainebleau, and talked of the many lovely sights in France that the tourist in the railroad train can never see.

On reaching Paris we stopped off at the Café de la Paix for brandy and coffee, while Mr. Gurdjieff worked on the manuscript of his book, "Beëlzebub's Tales to His Grandson," on which he has been busy for the past four years. He did much of his writing, or revising, in some crowded café, "his office" as he called it. And certainly the Café de la Paix, with the stream of passers-by on the Boulevard, should be crowded enough for anyone. Mr. Gurdjieff once remarked that he preferred to work thus, because the pageant of idiots under his eyes gave him a more detached view of the human race, and so put him more in the frame of mind of a visitor, like Beëlzebub, from another planet.

We sat at the Café de la Paix for some time, until Mr. Gurdjieff suggested that we go to his apartment. He had at first intended to visit a restaurant where he sometimes went to eat crayfish imported alive from Russia, of which he was very fond. But he decided that he did not deserve to go there that night: he had not done enough work during the day and did not feel that he could indulge himself. So, at about ten o'clock, we went to his own place, an ordinary furnished apartment in the seventeenth *arrondissement*. When Mr. Gurdjieff was comfortably stretched out on the bed, we had our evening meal, oriental and simple. There were slices of cold meat and smoked fish, chunks of bread, handfuls of green herbs and onion tops, all eaten with the fingers without plates, and the whole washed down with brandy and coffee. I shall never forget the picture of Mr. Gurdjieff reclining on the bed, as only an easterner can, a glimpse of his hairy chest showing through his open shirt, his frame shaking with laughter at some story told by Mr. Salzman. It struck me then what a Rabelaisian gusto for life (among many other things) the man had—a gusto for life in its essence, undiluted by the affectations of culture. At the table, his quick movements and gleaming smile expressed a huge relish for plain food. He had an oriental love of story-telling, the racier the stories the better. Even his English speech had an oriental simplicity that gave a deceptive impression of naïveté. Then, like the forest philosophers of India, he had little use for books and the external aids of learning. It is interesting to notice that even in revising his own book, he often had someone read it aloud to him, for his grasp of it was better through his ears than through his eyes. With us in the West, the eye has become almost our only means of absorbing ideas.

Looking back on my meetings with Gurdjieff, I feel that it is important to distinguish between Gurdjieff the man, with a certain life history, and Gurdjieff the exponent of a certain philosophy of life. If one places too much emphasis on Gurdjieff the man, responding, pleasantly or otherwise, to his rich, incalculable personality, but making no attempt to divine his ideas, one misses practically everything of value in the contact. Primarily Gurdjieff is a man, with a childhood and maturity behind him, crowded with associations and impressions, which, according to his own deterministic philosophy, are shaping his present behavior; he too has his prejudices and mistakes. But he is also expounding certain ideas, obtained from God knows where, a certain standard of values, certain attitudes to life, and a certain technique for meeting it, which I, among others, have found extremely interesting and, as far as I have been able to try them out, sound. These abstract conceptions are expressed in terms that are provided by his past experiences, and are more or less unintelligible to a person of my past. In his company I always had to make an effort to assimilate his language—both his speech and his actions—extract the pure ideas from it, and translate them into terms of my own experience. If I merely reacted to his personality, I would be missing a unique opportunity, and he would laugh at me and put me down as one of the "idiots." In such matters he is quite ruthless. He makes use of people when he needs them, but always under conditions that will allow them to derive a benefit for themselves if they make the effort. It is only the opportunity that he offers them; if they do not choose to grasp it, he laughs at them and uses them anyway. But if he is convinced of the seriousness of their efforts, he can be untiring, patient, and most ingenious in providing opportunities.

From what I saw of him, Mr. Gurdjieff's personal conduct can be best understood if one thinks of him as an artist in life. As an artist, he works not only through words, and music, and dances, but directly on human beliefs. His energies at that time were concentrated largely on writing and music, and he was apparently gay, or depressed, or tired, largely according as his day's task had gone well or ill. In matters of food, and shelter, and a sense of responsibility for the well-being of dependents, he is much like a patriarch of old; and he is treated as such by these dependents. But he

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is not explicitly a teacher, nor a prophet. He has none of the airs of saintliness, which so often make for hypocrisy in teachers and confusion in their pupils. Realizing that it is impossible to impart experience, he does not teach his philosophy. He believes, with the self-made man, that there is no royal road to understanding; what he himself acquired and could only acquire by effort, others must also acquire by effort. If they do not make the effort, so much the worse for them. He aims merely to induce this effort in others, to spur them on to further self-exertions.

It is natural, therefore, that he sets a high value on purposiveness: the quantity and direction of conscious human effort. I remember once hearing a saying of his, which ran somewhat like this: "The difference between an ordinary man and a conscious man is in the persistence of their aims. There are some people who maintain an aim for a week, or a month, or a year. They are relatively ephemeral, like insects. There are some whose major purpose animates them during their lifetime: they have attained human stature. Then there are the rare few whose aim is so intense and all-embracing as to endure beyond the human span. These are immortal."

Mr. Gurdjieff often undertakes the role of a destroying angel, and this is, I think, an important part of his work. His destructive force is aimed chiefly at breaking down old associations, verbal and otherwise—the tyranny of our unconscious impressions. He plays the part of an irritant or friction producer, to shock and challenge those about him into consciousness. In doing this, he plays many roles, parts which in the eyes of most of us may often seem not only capricious but foolish.

Besides a number of week-ends at the Chateau, I spent several days during the week working at the Institute. The atmosphere at the place was quite different then from that of Saturday and Sunday. The relaxation of the feast day was over, and work was the order of the day. Many of the older members, such as the Salzmans and the de Hartmanns, were engaged in special tasks, and were not seen by the manual workers, whom I joined. The work, besides that in the house and the kitchen garden, consisted mainly of making roads, clearing the forest, and breaking up stone for road metal. The work was arduous and the hours long, but whatever one did was purely voluntary. It was this knowledge that I did not have to do a stroke of work unless I wanted to that made what I did so valuable to me. When my muscles ached and my body asked, "Why are you doing this?" I could answer with peculiar poignancy, "I am doing this for consciousness." The manual work lasted from eight until twelve, from one until four, and from four-thirty until seven. The meals were served either out-of-doors or in a dingy room in the former servants' quarters. The menu was about as follows: for breakfast, coffee and toast without butter; for lunch a huge bowl of vegetable soup with meat in it, plenty of greens, and sometimes a cooked vegetable or macaroni, with large chunks of bread; for tea, bread and tea; for supper, much the same as for lunch. But cooking was not a fine art at the Institute. Food was given its proportionate place in the scheme of things by being served in simple courses in quantities sufficient to sustain existence. Elaborate meals were reserved for special occasions.

One of the most interesting experiences at the Institute was the bath every Saturday night. The bath-house was built into a hill-side, to retain its heat. All through the afternoon, Mr. Gurdjieff's brother, Dmitri Ivanovitch, was busy stoking up the fires, to make sure of plenty of hot water and steam. The bath-house consisted of three rooms: a cooling chamber with couches and benches to rest on; a large circular room, moderately hot, with benches and showers to soap oneself and wash; and then a small room for extremely hot temperatures. In the cooling chamber were frescoes by Salzman, some of them faded by the steam. Saturday night was always a special occasion at the Institute. The women took their bath at five o'clock. When they had finished, and everybody had eaten a light supper, all adjourned to the study-house for coffee, some time between eight and nine o'clock. There everyone sat about while a chapter from Mr. Gurdjieff's book was read aloud or—as happened the first time I was there—Mr. de Hartmann played the organ. Then, when Mr. Gurdjieff gave the signal, men and boys went to the bath-house. The bath was the regular Russian steam bath, accompanied with much joking and story-telling; but sometimes Mr. Gurdjieff's most valuable remarks came out in the course of this apparently casual conversation. He used to call upon each newcomer to tell two or three stories as a payment for his bath.

The study house, on the lawn, was a wide, irregularly shaped octagon—or rather a pentagon with three of its corners blunted to make additional sides —with a slightly arched roof. The ceiling was lined with a canopy, painted in bright colors, many of which, alas! had faded in that damp climate. The electric lights were hooded with shades of oriental design. The windows, running in an unbroken line along six sides, were painted with Persian and Hindu designs. On the balcony above the entrance was a collection of exotic musical instruments. On the canopy were painted, amongst the designs, a number of proverbs and sayings, of which the following is characteristic: "Happy is he who has no soul; happy is he who has a soul; terrible is it for him who has a soul germinating in him."

Still another side of Mr. Gurdjieff is revealed in his music, a music whose quality is so different from what one would associate with his outward appearance, that it was hard at first to believe that it had come from him. For, from this extraordinary man with the Rabelaisian exterior issues music that is spiritual in the fullest sense of that much abused word. For me, this music was an important clue

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in estimating the range of his character, for it reveals depths of tenderness and sensitiveness that were seldom visible during my brief stay with him. This music seems to fall into two chief groups: pieces that are strongly oriental in tone, and others that are similar to early church music, and which, I was told, Mr. Gurdjieff had composed for the prayers and invocations in his book, under the general title of Temple Music. It is said that he plans to compose a body of music which will express the same meaning, in the world of emotions, that he is expressing for the mind in his book, making the two complementary to each other. Few of the pieces take more than five minutes to play. I have been told that these short pieces are studies for subsequent choral and orchestral compositions. During my visit, they were played by Mr. de Hartmann, sometimes on the piano, and sometimes on the harmonium—a small house organ. Occasionally Mr. Gurdjieff played a tiny organ, specially designed to be held on the lap, while Mr. de Hartmann accompanied him on the piano. On this instrument one plays the keyboard with one hand and manipulates the bellows with the other.

The pieces themselves have definite musical form, both in the development of the theme and in the harmonic structure. The harmonies are simple but inevitable; some pieces are polyphonic.[1] The rhythms are often subtle and complex, and contribute greatly to the total effect of the music. As Mr. Gurdjieff composes a piece, he plays it over and over to Mr. de Hartmann, emphasizing now the melody, and now the rhythm or harmonic structure, until Mr. de Hartmann has it firmly fixed in his memory and can transcribe it to paper at his leisure.

The most unusual thing about this music, however, was its effect on me when I heard it, different from that of almost any other music I had ever listened to. I can only explain this by describing the effect of both upon myself. Usually music prompts me to day-dreams and lovely fancies; it carries me outside myself into an unreal world of images and undischarged muscular stimulations, with an indirect stirring of the emotions. But this music did not carry me out of myself at all: it centered its effect upon my very essence, it appealed directly to my emotions. It sang as if it had a message for me alone in the world—yet others have told me since that they had had precisely the same feeling. It aroused in me at will the feelings of joy, pity, sorrow, fear, struggle, and above all an exquisite yet terrible yearning. What I heard during those few hours made almost all other music seem tame and haphazard.

CARL ZIGROSSER.

What College Might Be[2]

I HAVE the honor to be a graduate of one of the least significant universities in this country, a university to which Walter Hines Page referred in one of his letters to Woodrow Wilson more than ten years ago when he wrote: "I said to Lord Bryce the other night, as I surveyed his elaborate gold lace, 'You're fine enough to take an LL. D. from the University of Nevada.'" When I first came on that remark I was a senior in college with a very deep regard for Walter Page and for Woodrow Wilson too. I can remember very clearly experiencing a flush of shame as I read it, and a slight feeling of disgust that I was attending such an obscure institution as Nevada when there was Leland Stanford only three hundred miles away—even less—and the University of California, which seemed to me almost as good, still nearer.

Naturally enough three years out of college has given me a somewhat different outlook on the matter. I no longer blush for my university, undistinguished though it may be considered, and I no longer bow in awe to Stanford, excellent though its reputation may be. If I were choosing a college today for four years as an undergraduate, I honestly do not know where I should go, or exactly what I should seek. I am quite sure I would not choose a university nearly the size of California, the only institution I have attended beside Nevada, but I do not know whether I would choose city or country for the location of my prospective college. I am not even sure that I would go to college at all, but if I did go I would seek a co-educational college first and last, and if no such college were open to me I would try for an education in some other and possibly better way.

Colleges, after all, are not the most important institutions in the world. I believe that a very large share of the writings on college education which have appeared in this country since the War have proceeded on the assumption that salvation was possible only to the degree that colleges were bettered. That is a thoroughly wrong assumption from the very start.

And while I have called this paper "What College Might Be," it is only fair to declare before

[1] I have since heard a number of pieces in which the harmony was complex and in which dissonance was used in an extraordinarily effective way.

[2] This article is one of those submitted in The New Republic's prize-essay contest, open to college undergraduates and graduates of not more than three years' standing. Miss Davies, as her article indicates, is a recent graduate of the University of Nevada.

The essay which won the first prize of $100, by Howard Jay Graham, was published in The New Republic of May 22. The second prize, $75, has been awarded to Ralph D. Rutenber, of the Princeton class of 1926.

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I have gone any farther that I am quite sure no such institution as an ideal college can ever be devised. It is easy enough for an individual to state the terms of his ideal college, and when they are stated they will mean very little even to him. At the very best he will be telling what he prefers, and that almost certainly will not be what any other college student in the world would choose if he were given a free hand. And, indeed, the plan might be best for none of the persons in question, to say nothing of the possibility of its being thoroughly bad for all.

I am suspicious of plans for Utopian colleges, because even when they are good plans, and Utopian plans are nearly always good in an ideal sense, they often fail entirely to live up to the thing they set out to do. They are good, but they cannot maintain that good very long in the kind of civilization we have made for ourselves today, for the simple reason that, since they do not enjoy the confidence of the *status quo,* they will inevitably be forced to give in to it, at least a little. Pioneer colleges start out bravely, and a generation after they have gotten under way they have nearly always swung pretty completely over to the conservative ranks, and are sometimes very proud of their action. A Utopian college can hardly hope to lead the procession of learning for long.

But that does not mean that colleges which are new departures in education are useless even when they are not bad. They are very far indeed from being useless. They often grow from brave and enlightened ideas—the good ones always grow that way—and they evolve in the course of time into institutions which display, as clearly as any institutions can, the force of Emerson's dictum about lengthened shadows and single men. They attract students of perhaps a little sturdier type than those found in the regulation college of any period. Moreover, they attract students of a kind who are won over by the independence and initiative which are at a premium in such institutions, and although, when such students later become eminent, the honor is claimed by the college when it might more fairly go to the individual, it is nevertheless true that the only hope of real learning and scholarship lies in a fearless combination of good college and honest students. Both are essential for any kind of real distinction.

And while I am suspicious of all of them I am still thoroughly in sympathy with most of the new colleges which are springing up today, and with most of the new ideas in the old colleges and universities. They are many and various, and some of them bear very slight relation to others, but it seems to me that practically all of them are good. I like the Wisconsin plan, and I like Swarthmore and all the other colleges with honors courses. Most of all I think I like Antioch College with its idea of pay as you go. Out here in California Pomona has evolved itself into a corporation called the Claremont Colleges which is intended to secure most of the good things of Oxford and Cambridge with none or very few of their disadvantages. For in the matter of size the authorities at Pomona quite truly believe that the more students there are in any particular college the more persons there are on the outside trying to control the way it is run. And the larger the group trying to control it the more unfitted each individual will be for such responsibility both in intelligence and character. In this clash of interests the student is bound to fare rather badly, and the more students there are the worse the student body as a whole fares when the fighting begins. One student counts for very little at California, the largest university in the world. My own alma mater is one of the smallest state universities in the country—it has about one thousand students now—and life is a little freer there, although not so very free after all.

But no one of these plans would serve as a pattern for all colleges, and the more highly desirable each might be for one group of students the less good it inevitably would have to be for the majority. The most glorious college in the world would consist, it seems to me, of two students and one other individual called a teacher, who knew more than they did about a certain subject. I think that arrangement would be something of an improvement on the old idea of Mark Hopkins, the student and the log, if for no other reason than because two students are better than one in such a relation. Whether three are better than two is a matter open to question.

I would like to see students control their own affairs as much as possible, and I would like to see them thoroughly realize the principle that taxation without the kind of representation which gets things done is the most despicable kind of tyranny. But when they do realize it and do get control of their own universities, colleges may still exist in name, but they will no longer be colleges as we know them or as anyone has ever known them at any time during their existence.

Moreover, I would like to see fraternities go, and all the fashionable eating clubs which have grown up in universities where Greek-letter fraternities do not exist. I believe, as a great many students undoubtedly do, that they are as undemocratic institutions as can be found anywhere in the United States, but I have no hope of seeing such societies go very soon, any more than I have a hope of seeing Socialism dominate our economic institutions some day. It is not impossible that such a time will come, but it is extremely improbable, and though I have a reasonable expectation of living fifty years longer I am quite sure that it will not come during my lifetime.

I do not see how any honest student can come out of a college or university today and submit any thorough-going plan for the reorganization of his institution. Faults he will see, of course, if he has any intelligence at all, and for specific dangers he may be able to suggest remedies worthy to be

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taken into consideration when improvement is attempted. But improvements in colleges and universities must necessarily be of very slow growth. It is all too easy to write that affairs should be bettered—everyone knows that they should be. It is only a little harder to suggest an elaborate Utopian scheme for bettering them, and when such a scheme is proposed it is pretty nearly bound to be somewhat foolish, or at the best impracticable. For most students have seen too many good plans tried and fail lamentably, to hold any illusions that their own prospectuses will have a much better fate.

While the analogy will not bear a thorough searching out, typical student bodies today appear to me rather in the position of dependencies of powerful countries who are ruled supposedly for their own good by the mother land, but who have proved and are proving extremely unruly in nearly every possible way. Great Britain and India, the United States and the Philippines might be cases in point, and while the difference of viewpoint is not one of race or color in college affairs, it is a difference of age and in interests which is quite as serious and quite as hard to resolve. But while it might be a good thing to cast political dependencies adrift, it would hardly be the best thing for college student bodies to steer entirely their own courses. After all, wisdom does come with age and experience, even though I seem heretical to my generation when I say so. Knowledge and enthusiasm do not make wisdom. It is a little more than both of those, and much harder to come at.

Should there be entire freedom in colleges? Why, yes, that would seem extremely desirable if it were not in fact impossible to have it in the face of having a college too. Should colleges be reconstructed as students want them? Superficially that would seem an excellent plan if only students could control what they want, and if only the economic pressure on colleges would allow it to be given to them. Should boards of regents and faculties then reorganize colleges as they think best for the good of all students? Decidedly yes, if they wish to, but all cannot try it. If all were able there would be no college problem, and reconstruction would be entirely unnecessary.

New experimental colleges are good. While they themselves cannot remain new or fresh for long they do drag old and famous colleges into line in specific instances if not in the general scheme. Such colleges are practical and their value is beyond all estimate in the kind of world we have today. If they are not of the utmost importance still they are well up the rungs of the ladder, and they come as near the ideal as any colleges can in this country at the present time. And while student-controlled colleges might be best in a Utopian world, they are impossible in the United States. Perhaps they are impossible anywhere where more than one subject —one very specific subject—is taught.

After all, college faculties are not omniscient. If they see the light only a little way, that is honestly all that may be expected of them, and if they do their best according to the little light they have, they have done enough. I think myself it would be better for everyone if some of them were humbler. Many wish to choose their students for promise of leadership, much as biologists of Edward Wiggam's kind would like to control the heredity of everyone in the world. But there are more things to capabilities than intelligence tests, just as there are more things in heredity than unit characters. Uncounted-on genes step in, in both cases.

LOUISE DAVIES.

Washington Notes

WITH his Law Enforcement Commission out of his system, Mr. Hoover will, I think, function more freely in other directions than he has before. He will concentrate, for instance, more vigorously upon the legislative problems of the extra session. I look for an increase in White House aggressiveness, more self-assertion, less constraint in dealing with press and politicians, a greater ease of manner and movement. Beyond question, while he was in the throes of producing this commission, the presidential style was badly cramped. There is no doubt that he sweated dreadfully over it, strained and suffered. The impossibility of getting the men he wanted naturally worried him. He was fretted by the question, reiterated at press conferences, as to when the commission would be ready, and was worried lest, notwithstanding his best effort, the whole business in the end should prove futile. To one or two of his intimate circle he said as much, and expressed irritation over the necessity of naming the Commission at all. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the only two specific promises made by Mr. Hoover in the course of his campaign have both turned into prickly propositions, in the redemption of which he can find neither personal nor political profit nor pleasure.

The promise to call the extra session, now the source of a great deal of trouble, it has been repeatedly pointed out, was forced upon him by the ghost-seeing, too timid Mr. Borah, who, having got him into trouble, is in his highly moral, thoroughly conscientious, well meaning but muddle-headed way, making it just as troublesome as he possibly can. The law-enforcement promise, however, was not a Borah idea nor one of Hoover's. As I get it, the notion of meeting the prohibition issue raised by the redoubtable Al, by naming a commission to ascertain the facts and report, was the bright idea of the unfortunate Donovan, who during the campaign was the candidate's particular sweetheart, constant companion and friend, closer than a couple of brothers, a hand-holding, knee-patting, "steady boy" counselor and guide. At least, so he pictured himself.

As Mr. Hoover, looking back, grasps how completely unnecessary both these promises were, and, looking forward, sees the multitudinous difficulties and embarrassments yet to flow from them, it would be extremely natural if at times his reflections upon these two champions of the campaign were tinged with a certain bitterness.

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As a matter of fact, however, I have reason to believe that his feeling toward the Senator from Idaho is far more one of sorrow than of anger. The President is a naïve fellow in a great many ways, appreciating the value of the Borah services on the stump and taking seriously that "seeing eye to eye" stuff which Mr. Borah fed the eager correspondents after his conference with the candidate. There is no doubt that Mr. Hoover warmed to Mr. Borah and visualized Borah and himself after the inauguration pulling together to put over a "great constructive program."

When, as soon as opportunity offered, Borah began to break up the administration dishes and run around in the economically eccentric circles to which he is congenitally adapted, the pain and surprise of the trusting Herbert were enormous and acute. While the experience has saddened him, it has given no little satisfaction to the Old Guard regulars in the Senate, who at heart dislike Borah and Hoover with about equal intensity, and who would have been greatly distressed and disturbed at anything like a working alliance between the two. Nothing could possibly have rendered the Old Guard more impotent and absurd.

It is hard to forgive Mr. Borah for spoiling so interesting a prospect, and it is easy to understand the gratification of the Old Guard leaders that that "eye to eye" stuff turned out to be entirely for campaign purposes. Since the election not a single question has arisen upon which Mr. Borah has seen eye to eye with the Executive, not one issue has developed on which he thinks the President sound. He couldn't even see eye to eye in the matter of the proposed scaling down of our claim against Germany, a gesture designed to further the success of the Reparations Conference and thus to promote peace and prosperity—our own as well as others.

But to get back to the Commission. On the whole it was well received; the anti-administration papers had considerable difficulty in picking flaws in it. Nearly everybody agreed that, so far as the individual selections are concerned, Mr. Hoover did about as well as could be done. None of this means, however, that the labors of the Commission will not prove disappointing, that its work will not be in vain, or that it will point the way for a solution of the great, perplexing problem of prohibition. Apparently Mr. Hoover wants the Commission to consider prohibition as just one of a number of laws frequently violated in the United States, with which it has no more to do than to suggest some better machinery to make it effective. He has stressed that idea many times. If that is to be the line upon which the Commission proceeds it will not get far. It will, in fact, do little more than reiterate the facts and recommendations of the American Bar Association and various other bodies in the past. My feeling is, however, that the Commission will not confine itself to the more or less nebulous Hoover directions. There are on the Commission at least two or three men accustomed to grappling with realities, who will not be content to shadow-box, who accepted appointment with no idea of making an academic investigation or a theoretical report. I am of the opinion, furthermore, that the report will fix upon the Prohibition Amendment responsibility for the bulk of present law violation and, while not even suggesting its repeal, will make recommendations exceedingly unpalatable to the fanatical drys.

One of the reasons I have for this belief is the obvious fact that the members of the Commission are concededly intelligent and unfanatical. There is not one—including the woman—whose mind is not reasonably open, not one, so far as can be judged, who is impervious to facts. With such a commission, no other conclusion seems possible. Because of this, it is particularly gratifying to note that the dry spokesmen of the Cannon type are somewhat more enthusiastic over the personnel of the Commission, and express a deeper confidence in its impartial judgment, than the wet leaders of the Association against the Prohibition Amendment. These approve, but somewhat restrainedly. At any rate, no federal commission that can be recalled has had as interesting or as hard a job as this one—that is, if it functions as both sides hope it will.

T. R. B.

Washington.

The Lady A'h A'h

The lady A'h A'h, beautiful lady
Clear lake—
(Hoofs of the wood deer wade
In the weed-green wash, in the wavy shallows)

White skin, small breasts, tall
As a young man dead for love in a legend

We meet at dusk by the stones at a stream's edge
We name with frank eyes our unruly affections

We state our emotions with mutual truth and respect
We conduct ourselves like persons kissing in public

We talk of passion at once. If our sleeves rub
We announce our love aloud, withdrawing our elbows

The slightest advance is checked by the mouth's telling
The fragrance of hair is so named and conceded

Why do I praise lake water? We need
Earth and dark for the growing of roots successfully

Here everything shows. The floating cress
The trout's back, the pebbles blue on the sand bar

The moon is reflected small as a child's hand
The dragon-fly wings wave too in the water

Nothing is secret here as a woman's thought
In the wishing of love would be nor dumb as her body

Nothing is dark here as the tunneled blood

(The sun discovers the rippled track in the sand.)

Did the Emperor Wu love Li Fu-jen for her candor?

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH.

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The Literary Racketeers

WELL once upon a time there was a literary racket and it seemed to make quite a lot of noise.

Well it seems there was an enterprising fellow named Haas. Well Haas was really a very idealistic fellow, and he had gotten hold of a very noble idea called the Book-of-the-Month Club. And the idea was that Haas went around to quite a lot of people and said look here, if you'll sign up for the Book-of-the-Month Club I'll see that you get the best book that comes out every month and it will cost you a mere bagatelle and you will not have to worry and fret and pay attention to a lot of sneers and advice from a lot of critics who are no better than they should be. So quite a lot of people thought it was quite a good idea and they signed up with Mr. Haas. Well the publishers got wind of Mr. Haas's idea but they just laughed and said there goes another one. And they sent him their books every month to choose from because after all idealism sometimes works and business is business.

Well but after a while Mr. Haas had been quite indefatigable and it seems that he had collected about 100,000 people who wanted their books chosen for them because they were too busy or something. And so this put quite a different aspect on the situation. Because the inertia of 100,000 people is really quite strong, and when you get 100,000 people all letting you choose a book for them it makes quite a big edition. So all the publishers were very nice to Mr. Haas and they all began to call him Joe and ask him what he was doing for dinner this evening.

Well Mr. Haas was sitting so prettily that he made a very attractive picture. So some other people got together and they said how about not letting that big goober get away with all the gravy. And so they started an even nobler idea which they called the Literary Guild and they began to collect people with inertia because there were still quite a lot of them left.

Well but Mr. Haas and these other people were really quite modest and they didn't believe in pushing themselves forward too much and besides they had been working so hard all their lives at being idealistic that they hadn't had much chance to be educated properly. So taking one thing with another they thought it would be a good idea to get hold of a board of editors to choose the books for them. Well this was all right for Mr. Haas because he was first in the field and he had the whole country to pick from. So he chose Mr. Heywood Broun who has been psychoanalyzed so much that he has quite an interesting personality, and Mr. Henry Seidel Canby who has really read quite a lot of books and he could probably get a job at Yale University, and Mr. Christopher Morley who lots of people think is practically as great a writer as Robert Louis Stevenson himself though of course not so handsome, and Mr. William Allen White who knows all about Kansas, and Miss Dorothy Canfield who is a very nice lady. So when it came to choosing a board of editors for the Literary Guild they said look here you fellows Haas has taken the creme de la creme. So then one of them said well never mind, we must just do what we can but they had to take some rather mere people.

Well by this time some of the publishers had begun to think things over and they had become rather indignant. Because after all what was to prevent the Book-of-the-Month Club choosing somebody else's book and this was usually what happened. So then Mr. Macrae who was the president of Dutton's wrote Mr. Haas a rather spirited letter and said Mr. Haas was perhaps not really very idealistic about the books he chose and as a matter of fact he was probably not in business for his health. So Mr. Haas's feelings were very much hurt, and he came right back at Mr. Macrae and said that the reason why Mr. Macrae seemed to be quite annoyed with the Book-of-the-Month Club was probably because none of Dutton's books had ever been chosen. So both their feelings seemed to be quite hurt and each of them took quite a high moral tone. Well but to make matters worse a lot of booksellers got together in Boston to have dinner because business had not been very good lately and they said to each other you might as well make sure of a good dinner while you can get it. And Mr. Brentano who is quite a successful bookseller himself and altruistic into the bargain presided at the dinner and he made a speech and he talked quite a lot against Mr. Haas and the Book-of-the-Month Club. Well so you can see how people's feelings were being hurt right and left and isn't it a pity because after all everybody was really being just as idealistic as possible.

Well anyhow that's how the matter stood at this writing, and if you ask me nothing will come of it, because there is still really quite a lot of inertia to be signed up and why not?

Well to turn to another interesting question there is a publishing house in New York by the name of Simon and Schuster and it is an old historic firm and they have gotten where they have gotten to just by native shrewdness and grit. So they have not had to bother much about Book-of-the-Month Clubs because they quite often get a best-seller themselves that goes over 100,000 though sometimes there is too much grit in it and not enough shrewdness and then the book is a flop. Well so Simon and Schuster got hold of a book called "Cradle of the Deep" which was supposed to have been written by a girl who had grown up at sea and all about her true experiences, and I think myself that the real author was the person who wrote the article in the Cosmopolitan Magazine signed Calvin Coolidge. Well anyhow this book was not exactly a flop and a lot of sea-going people like Mr. William McFee and Mr. Felix Riesenberg were quite enthusiastic about it so then some other people had the idea that maybe the book was just a hoax and Mr. Lincoln Colcord said so. So then some people say that Joan Lowell which was the name of the girl who was supposed to have written the book hit Mr. Colcord smack in the jaw and if she did I certainly do think it was not very ladylike of her though perhaps rather human. Well so in the meantime everybody got quite excited about this book and Simon and Schuster seem to have sold quite a lot of copies. And I should think they would be quite pleased because they have never been able to put over a novel before in a big way.

T. S. M.

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Chester A.

N—— LIVES in the East Sixties. He is a bachelor with an income, and if he had been without this support, he would have been a journalist or writer of books. As it is, he writes every now and then a little article in which he is not concerned with what he really wants to say, but with getting something said that will go over—go over where, N—— has not considered very deeply. Or he writes a book review, though rarely. His chief interest is going to parties and keeping up with the artistic excitements of the town. To these excitements in art he brings a natural intensity and enthusiasm, no deep or solid culture, a bright, gregarious mind, and a very considerable gift of loyalty—a kind of loyalty to the moment it is, for he goes hotly on from season to season, finding every year something that is the greatest thing that ever was of its kind, and resenting anybody who tries to say less.

Side by side with these engaging contacts, cultivations and enthusiasms, N—— has another purpose at which he works from time to time, or at any rate speaks of. Curiously enough, he is writing a life of Chester A. Arthur. This would be hard to explain, no doubt, if we undertook it seriously, but we may let it pass as some pedantry that got going long ago in his small college days, when it seemed to him that he would write a solid historical masterpiece and show biographers what biography can be—he is thirty-seven now—and it connects with the dogmatic stubbornness that underlies his boilings over nowadays and makes him so resentful when your heat is dimmer or more cautious than his own. And since this book will never be finished and never written in fact, there is nothing to worry about. I am not sure why, but there always seems to me to be something incredibly comic about the idea of writing a life of Chester A. Arthur. Whether the name is funny or the hero seems pushed up into a sheer mythology of stuffed shirt and emptiness and high station, I don't know. At any rate, the whole idea has the shimmer of farce on it, for others evidently as well as for me, and we all began long ago to call N—— Chester A., and after a while Chester.

When Chester is worn down with his world of writers and musicians, theater people and decorators, people who as often as not have something to show for their efforts and come off famously or at least profitably, this foundation basis of his own career enables him to allude to reading and research and serious pursuits. It allows him, also, a reason for staking out dealers to watch for certain items and for collecting Americana in bookshops, very often in bindings that look quite well in his apartment. But if he were thrown with scholars and professors—which he is not—Chester would rebound into his New York world, the first nights he has attended, the openings of exhibitions, the talked-of books, the people he knows, sees at lunch, calls by their first names, and would give you every indication of how contemporary and alive he and the season are; for he seethes with novelty and greatness, and detests people who remark on their pleasure in some work of art but at the same time realize that this theme, say, of a drama is in Euripides, done well—not necessarily better—or that this passage in a picture is derived from Tintoretto, who did it superbly, or that she does not yet sing so well as Sembrich must have done after twenty years of study, this young lady from Nebraska, despite the special train that brings so many citizens of her town and state to her debut in Mozart, whose music has the same relation to her that it would to a sparrow. In short, Chester belongs in our New York to the cult of the Muse of the New, Snappy and Greatest; and you must let him believe that the great things in this season are the greatest things in any season. Dear old Chester, in order to see his art-lights he eats in bad restaurants so often, deserting his excellent cook at home, who has had to substitute mixing Martinis for roasting beef, that he is quite drawn and yellow and glassy-eyed—one of the interesting personalities around town.

We must consider seriously, nevertheless, just what this is that Chester represents.

What is it he consists in, and why is it of value in life and art?

It consists of a genuine emotional response to some artistic experience and very likely fad. He sees a play, for instance, that people like and for which tickets are hard to get. He really likes it, feels it, is willing to talk about it and to fight for it wittily and eloquently, as there is need, and to give parties for the people mixed up in it. He goes into a sort of snobbish mush and peevish exaltation. Anything of the same kind that came before this piece must, if mentioned at all, be compared unfavorably with it, or you are a grouch or trying to be individual. This is the greatest play of its kind we have ever seen. He gets a pleasure out of stepping on his own mind and resenting the action of yours. He can talk much more happily in this high style and in this exclusion of discrimination, culture and permanence. It leaves him room for next year's heroics, and takes the place of whatever he has forgotten from the past. If you remind him that two years ago he said that some like work of art was the greatest ever, he will either say he was speaking ironically when he spoke so, or that, no matter, this new piece has put it in the shade, or that you are trying to throw cold water on everything.

You have to take Chester, then, for what he is. If he is the midwife of fads, explosions and successes, he is also the champion, busy and *émotionné,* of fresh hopes and aspirations, experiments, new dreams and daring importations. He is so bright, snappily cynical, childishly sentimental, and kind and generous and thwarted, so much sheer fan, income and echo, that he has his place in our town.

He has the valuable gift for warm response, loyal repetition, short memory, for being moved by the beautiful and fine, for seconding the applauded, or being impressed with trash, or believing in success, that can be of so much use to art; which, though it cannot always be good, must always be believed in. Chester's brain for a long time now has been the brain of a news-stand, but his feelings and hubbub are a part of the vitality that keeps us going and art plausible.

One way to defend Chester and not let him be set down as merely an old male matinée girl, is to say that his attitude is like that that seems wise as regards the President of one's country. The President may be dull, flat, a mere

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tool of some special interests, a simple, forceful mediocrity, a specious wind of oratory, or some genuine greatness. But any way you take it, he is President of the country, and no matter how good or bad he is, there is a certain advantage in our making him into greatness for the time he lasts in the White House. The young lady who said that nobody could understand Einstein—President Harding himself couldn't understand Einstein—had at least some advantage out of it: she preserved for herself a sense of Humility and a belief in Eminence. It may be a good thing to worship in the President qualities that he is without but that you yourself live by. You betray your mind for the hunger of your soul, and desert plain facts to follow heroic and ideal substances. If you forget how you have forgotten Presidents by the score and could not recall the demigod of two decades back, no matter, you have at least on hand for the present a multitudinous instance of the virtues. You gild the lily in your own self, and paint the rose of expectation in the State. There is something, then, about Chester's heats, about his membership in the Throb Clique, that keeps art *bona fide* and helps to make the moment fruitful and believed-in, as we believe in the exact moment now at which we are alive, with all its desire and pressure of life.

Lately Chester had got himself engaged and the two of them will take a trip to Paris. His fiancée is a painter who does lucrative covers for fiction magazines and sometimes helps to pick the girls for the chorus in musical shows.

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

Slaves of the City

SIR: The robot—what a relief to learn from Stuart Chase that his number is not nearly so great as sensational writers have led us to believe!—is not the only "slave" of the machine. Take the case I know best—my own.

Driving a car does not expand my ego. If I were the only one, or one of a few in my village who drove a car, it might; but I don't know a boy over sixteen here who can't drive a car. It is true that when first I learned I was pleased with myself and even went out driving alone merely for the pleasure of it. But in a month driving had become a routine, a stale trick, and a deadly bore. Who drives for pleasure in our village? The very old. Most of their lives were lived in the horse age; the car is still something of a novelty to them. . . . I wonder whose ego is best served—the man on horseback or the man at the wheel of a roadster? True, in horseback days, many or most could ride, but some were expert and some were not; and some could never become expert. Who can't become an expert chauffeur? I say anybody—the dull, the imaginative; the weak and the strong; heroes and cowards. Our washerwoman drives, the grocer's boy drives, the banker drives, the artist down the street drives, and all equally well, all with the same expression—that chauffeur's face!

Visiting recently in Grand Rapids, I was surprised when my host told me that his two children—11 and 13—would do almost anything to avoid being driven to school in the family car, and as for the Sunday afternoon drive—I saw them avoid that. And when I discovered that in the circuit of an afternoon's drive you could not get out of the city—the "country" I had known as a boy had been eaten away by additions, developments, filling stations, signboards for many miles—I did not blame them. But when I was a boy a buggy ride to Plaster Creek—eight miles away—was a trip to a strange land, to a different world, in a word, a trip from the city to the country. There is some deep truth here about machinery: a way of getting quickly and comfortably into the country destroys the country.

But to get back to slavery. In our village there is one industry—fishing. We are ten hours from New York; five from Boston. The population is around 3,500; we are at the end of the highway, there is no through traffic. The end of the cape, surrounded on three sides by the ocean. The train comes in twice a day. Our village sounds remote. It was, a few years ago. Now it is urban. The motor car, the cinema (talkies coming this summer) and the radio did that. I happen to like the country; seasons interest me; I don't need daily newspapers (even though I worked for them ten years). I don't like to hurry; I'll work enough to earn a living but no more, having no conscious desire to be rich; and I don't care very much for the smart slang of New York. I happen to like the country. But the machine takes it away from me, a little each year, at an increasing rate. Can I (and those like me; there must be some) stop that? No. Then are we free men?

It is true that I can refuse to buy a radio. But all my neighbors have them. Their strains come across my hedge. My neighbors' talk is of the radio. The old sea captain says: "Rain tomorrow, the radio said so." He doesn't need to look at the sea to find out now. It is true I need not go every night—or at all—to the cinema, but every girl in town apes movie actresses—the cinema is not confined to the theater. And as for the car, I could avoid that only by becoming a hermit. The village talks, dresses, drives, drinks, thinks, like New York. The joke is on me, for I came here to avoid New York.

It is often pointed out, and always with pride, that inventors and far-seeing business men have put over "improvements" despite the people. I remember an article on the blessings of machinery in The Saturday Evening Post. Machines made for freedom, I read. Without them democracy was impossible, and in the same article I was told that steam trains, illuminating gas, automobiles, electric lights were all opposed by the mass of the people. This is worth a thought. We are a democracy. We elect our executive. Did we vote on motor cars? The ballot—back in 1903 or thereabouts—would have been worded as follows: "Are you in favor of pouring city traffic into every country highway? Are you in favor of a revolutionary change in our manner of living?" Who cares who is President, when any meddling inventor plus a promoter may, without consulting anybody, drastically modify the daily routine of every human being in the country? Slavery to the machine means having our manner of life changed by it without being consulted.

As Mr. Chase so well said: "The machine continues to revolve on its own race track, breeding and expanding according to laws which we do not even understand; unbroken and untamed."

One of the ways he would tame it would be to put it wholly in charge of engineers, technicians. "We would conquer the machine!" Why, then, make machinists supreme over you? He suggests a painter and poet or two to "salt" the more unimaginative moments of the engineers. (Here is your desk, Emily Dickinson!) He would also stimulate new inventions! New and better machines, that is. This is the plight to which machines have brought you? Why, then, one of the things to do is to make more machines.

The Stuart Chase articles are terrifically interesting to me because they seem (perhaps I'm wrong) a very able, last-ditch defense of machines—by one who LIKES to drive in traffic, who admires inventors. Mechanical inventors, of course, should be shot. Or at least they should be given a choice of quick, painless death

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and turning to pure science, which in this century, thank heavens, has less and less to do with gadgets.

In Mr. Chase's list of "effects manifestly good" we are told that in the machine age the "wayfaring man" is readier to ask the question, "What makes this thing act the way it does?" Perhaps he is, but let's ask the physicists what kind of an answer may honestly be given him. It would go something like this: "We don't know, because it is made up of particles of something doing we don't know what. As for the particles, we may guess that they are groups of waves of the sub-ether, and as for the sub-ether—well, the ether is apparently something having all the qualities of nothing save that of non-existence. The sub-ether, you see, is slightly more tenuous." But perhaps the question is not scientific in this sense? A super-natural answer, I take it, won't do, for a decline of "superstition" is one of the manifestly good effects. Then the question is a mechanic's question and the answer can only supply data—for what? Some new mechanical contrivance. The invigorating "winds of change"—mechanical change—invigorate machines, not men.

One likes to be a fool in one's own way and I would therefore, on the basis of Mr. Chase's extensive and evidently accurate data, cast my one, useless little vote for an abandonment of power machinery because it is ugly and tiresome. My vote, but not my hope. I don't believe men change their ways unless forced by catastrophic accident—war, for instance. And perhaps it is present-day pacifism's historical role to hold off the next world war until planes and explosives have been so far developed that, once started, the war must inevitably result in the destruction of all industrial towns on both sides. That might supply an interlude free of mass-production and a convincing glimpse for the unremembering majority of what we have lost.

NORMAN MATSON.

Provincetown, Mass.

Mr. Newton's "Rabelais"

SIR: Several weeks ago I had occasion to write to the Commissioner of Customs at Washington requesting, in a merry vein, the return of a copy of "Rabelais" which a New York customs inspector had removed from a case of old books I was importing, under the absurd delusion that it was "obscene merchandise."

My communication found its way into the newspapers all over the country, and was the subject of much editorial and other comment, both grave and gay, with the result that I have been deluged with letters and telephone messages inquiring whether my "Rabelais" had been returned to me. To all inquirers I would say that IT HAS NOT, and it is quite possible that the authorities in Washington will permanently sequester the work.

The publishers of a wise and entertaining book on the United States by André Siegfried have chosen to translate its proper title, "The United States of Today," into "America Comes of Age." This title is misleading; we have not yet come of age, at least our governmental authorities have not; they are still, in the words of the Bard of Avon, infants, "mewling and puking in their nurses' arms."

Good Uncle Andy Mellon has been so occupied of late trying to discover some means by which he could continue his excellent service to the people of these United States, without disseverating himself from the savings of a lifetime—our Senators seeming to believe that the Secretary of the Treasury should qualify for this high office by poverty alone—that he probably has no idea what is going on in one of his many departments. I should like very respectfully to point out to him that, as I am advised, Mr. E. W. Camp, the Commissioner of Customs, has recently resigned and his duties are at present performed by Mr. Frank Dow as Acting Commissioner. Mr. Dow, in point of fact, has been functioning since April 15, and I assume that it is he who has pinched the "Rabelais." "A new broom sweeps clean"; the wisdom of ages is in the proverb. Maybe Mr. Dow has swept my "Rabelais" into a corner. . . .

A. EDWARD NEWTON.

Philadelphia, Pa.

The Masochistic Wet-Dry

SIR: I wish to thank Mr. Duncan Cassidy for his article "'Moonshine' on the Mississippi" and especially for the two paragraphs of it which deal with the mental processes, if any, of the wet-drinking drys. The prohibition psychology, which I have never quite grasped, begins to grow limpid. Perhaps the very simplicity of it was what made it baffling.

Expressed in somewhat different terms from those employed by Mr. Cassidy, it seems to be only another form of masochism. We have created a new sin for our own torment and the delectation of the rest of the world. We must admit that prohibition is right—that it is very wrong to deal or indulge in alcoholic beverages, and then we can go and do this very thing as much as we like, so long as we keep on realizing how sinful we are. It's somewhat the procedure of which Protestants are accustomed to accuse Catholics.

Or perhaps it is not necessary to charge oneself with sin at all, but only to admit that the sale of alcoholic beverages is something to be outlawed, and then calmly proceed to sell them on an outlaw basis. Thus we give lip-service to the eleventh and greatest of the Commandments, and then break it with a clear conscience.

This latter supposition seems, after all, to conform better to Mr. Cassidy's theory of the thing as something stupid rather than hypocritical, as apparently it is in the great majority of cases. But is it any wonder, then, that the highly civilized nations of Europe not only detest us, but are inclined to regard us as a nation of inferior mentality?

Washington, D. C. A. D. GARMAN.

The Golden Ass

SIR: Readers of The New Republic may be interested in the following contribution to the literature of censorship. Mr. Chief Justice Fischer, speaking for the United States Customs Court, Second Division, in reference to a copy of "The Golden Ass" of Lucius Apuleius:

> After glancing through the volume, which is in evidence herein, we experience no hesitancy whatever in characterizing the subject-matter thereof as shockingly and revoltingly obscene. In our opinion, it is just plain literary rubbish and filth so putrid that it sounds the very depths of human depravity. In his licentious mythical ravings, the author has stooped so low that his work, far from being a so-called classic, reflects not only the trash of a degenerated human mind but likewise constitutes a gratuitous insult and libel on the poor dumb brute beast whose good name is sought to be traduced and defamed.

SAMUEL E. THORNE.

Harvard Law School, Cambridge, Mass.

Thanks for Professor Whitehead

SIR: I have just given the first of what are destined to be several readings for Professor Whitehead's inspired article of April 17 on "The Aims of Education." May I, as one of your readers, be permitted to say Amen and thank you? My copy is much marked; it is an article that must be cut out and kept, until the book appears that is to contain it. And may I utter the wish and devout hope that when the author makes the next of his memorable contributions to philosophy he will employ the same terse and utterly lucid style, which is so evidently at his command? It would from many a puzzle free us, and hazy notion.

Vienna, Austria. DICKINSON S. MILLER.

Ethics and Trout

SIR: I was quite interested in Robert C. Binkley's article, "Ethics of Nullification." But he left us in the dark on one phase of the subject. How large should a social unit be before it has a moral right to nullify a law? I would like to know because I like to catch trout and the closed season on trout is sometimes an inconvenience.

Seattle, Wash. C. T. MACFARLANE.

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Elinor Wylie's Poems

Angels and Earthly Creatures, by Elinor Wylie. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 63 pages. $2.50.

THE English—and of course I mean "the best of the English"—have a way of looking at American writers which greatly resembles the way their ancestors of the eighteenth century looked at the noble savage. They love nothing American so much as an American book whose English edition has to be supplied with a glossary. And though one may imagine that in time this state of affairs may be changed, the present truth is that literary America, in English eyes, is colonial, at best. It is not that they deny our common literary ancestry, but that they had it first. And this *droit de seigneur* is a source of much satisfaction to them in these otherwise unsatisfactory times, as well as a rankling grievance to some of our 100-percent American literary men. To an intelligent neutral—say, a Frenchman of the stamp of Remy de Gourmont—this and other such squabbles of high literary politics might seem strange and inwardly amusing.

Both these parties: the gentlemen who persist in regarding America as a literary dependency of Great Britain, and those who want the United States to be more isolationist in literature than she has ever been able to be in politics—both these parties may be somewhat perplexed to determine the exact literary nationality of Elinor Wylie. To them we may as well, perhaps, leave the vexing question. It is enough for our purposes that she wrote the English language as few Englishmen can write it, and yet was certainly American.

When we think of the numbers of people writing today, and writing creditably, and of how few of them have achieved a real style, we see at once why Elinor Wylie should stand out as she does from the crowd of modern poetasters. Whatever else she lacked, she had a literary physiognomy. Most writers, for all their agonized gesturing, do no more than make faces; but Elinor Wylie had a face. Whether or not it is a face that will be long remembered, it was well known and unmistakable by her contemporaries. This style of hers, this individual and unique manner, is as much a part of her prose as of her verse; but it is in her verse that we see her lineaments most clearly. Her novels are a poet's novels—and to say this is really to disparage them. Although they are competently executed and almost too well written, the deepest emotion they arouse in us is one of respect for the author: we put down the book, and say uneasily, "Yes, very good. It's not quite the kind of thing I care for." This sweeping criticism is far from just; there are passages in all Elinor Wylie's novels where she attains artistic perfection, where we find our hearts and our minds equally, and deeply, engaged. But in general it may be said that her verse is the more successful of these two instruments which she played on so competently.

"Angels and Earthly Creatures" is technically a posthumous book, but hardly that, for it was arranged in its final form by herself, the publishers tell us, on the very night before her sudden death. The book consists of four parts: a sonnet sequence of nineteen sonnets, a section entitled "Elements and Angels," followed by "Earthly Creatures," and "Elegies and Epistles." The book contains in all sixty-three poems. Not even a professor of poetry, I dare say, would attempt to rank these poems in order of merit, or even to state dogmatically which were the finest of the lot; and it would not much matter if he did, for the fate of poetry rests in the hands of the common reader. That common reader, it may be surmised, will not set the stamp of his entire approval on the poetry of Elinor Wylie. In what he may suppose to be the artificiality of her manner he may lose both the depth and the intensity of what she has to say. But here and there his attention will be struck, his mind stirred, or his heart moved, by some phrase of such distinction that he will recognize it as the essential stuff of human language, if only because he is used to shoddy. It is both the strength and the weakness of poets that what they say to us can be said only as poetry. No prose translation can ever capture their meaning; the heart's cry cannot be translated. It is their strength, because a poetic statement of truth cannot be equaled in any other form of human expression; it is their weakness, because poetry is such a personal expression that the best we can do is overhear it. Of what we overhear, we have already lost some, and may misconstrue more.

The series of sonnets which stand first in this collection are of a high order of excellence, but, whether or not it is because the sonnet itself has become such an excessively literary form that it now conveys less than its share of poetic feeling, the introductory one, "Although these words are false, none shall prevail," seems to me the only one which is completely successful. The strength of its expression is what lifts it above the others, an expression not of defiance and not of despair, but of something compounded of both, and more positive than either. Of the other poems in the book, critical judgments will perhaps be as numerous as the critics; none of these poems is negligible, and their form and manner are so varied that they are apt to appeal to widely differing tastes. But the two long poems, "This Corruptible," and "Hymn to Earth," stand out as the most ambitious in the book. "This Corruptible," I think, is a failure, though a respectable one; for once, Elinor Wylie has chosen a metrical scheme unfortunate for her purpose; but "Hymn to Earth" is a poem as perfect as any she ever wrote, and perhaps her nearest approach to greatness. These are the last two stanzas:

> Hail, element of earth, receive thy own,
> And cherish, at thy charitable breast,
> This man, this mongrel beast:
> He plows the sand, and, at his hardest need,
> He sows himself for seed;
> He plows the furrow, and in this lies down
> Before the corn is grown;
> Between the apple bloom
> And the ripe apple is sufficient room
> In time, and matter, to consume his love
> And make him parcel of a cypress grove.
>
> Receive him as thy lover for an hour
> Who will not weary, by a longer stay,
> The kind embrace of clay;
> Even within thine arms he is dispersed
> To nothing, as at first;
> The air flings downward from its four-quartered tower
> Him whom the flames devour;
> At the full tide, at the flood,
> The sea is mingled with his salty blood:
> The traveler dust, although the dust be vile,
> Sleeps as thy lover for a little while.

These are not the accents of minor poetry. Although Elinor Wylie's delicacy of statement—which does not im-

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ply either a vagueness or a weakness of statement—resulted generally in giving the effect of an essentially feminine quality to her verse, her best poems, I think, are those from which this feminine quality is absent. It is not that, in them, she ceases to be a woman, but that she becomes something more. There are many poems in her last book which make us feel that we are listening to the voice (sometimes the wise and tender voice, sometimes the bitter and agonized voice) of a woman; but almost as often as we turn the page we come upon the others, in which we neither feel nor are curious about the sex, or the nationality, or the person of the poet; we are conscious only that

> These words are true, although at intervals
> The unfaithful clay contrive to make them false.

T. S. MATTHEWS.

The English Poor Law

The English Poor Law, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. Two vols. $14.

WITH these two volumes Mr. and Mrs. Webb conclude a History of English Local Government since 1869 upon which they have been engaged for nearly thirty years. With its completion, the student of English social institutions has before him a survey such as no other country can proffer in an analogous field. It is difficult to overpraise the book as a whole. The material had to be discovered; the very institutions were hardly known; the persons involved were, for the most part, not even names except to an odd local historian here and there. From literally thousands of manuscript volumes and printed works Mr. and Mrs. Webb have woven a veritable Bayeux tapestry. They have made the categories of their subject with the same finality—there is no higher praise—as in their History of Trade Unionism. They have done it with a breadth of view and an insight into persons that make their work immediately of classic proportions. There is no student of unemployment and its consequences anywhere in the world who can afford to neglect the lesson these volumes imply. I venture the hope that at least the last two hundred pages will be read and digested by men who, like President Hoover, are anxious to grapple with the problem. Nowhere else can English experience be found so amply digested.

The two present volumes deal with the period from the Commission of 1832 to the last (but by no means final) revolution effected this year by Mr. Neville Chamberlain. Broadly that history may be summarized by saying that it has abolished the Board of Guardians and left the Poor Law standing. What has happened is the realization that the development of the positive State has made *ad hoc* administration of one aspect of the social problem an admitted error of principle; exactly as Mr. and Mrs. Webb insisted it was in their famous Minority Report of 1909. But it has not persuaded the Conservative party to approach the problem of the able-bodied unemployed in terms of a national solution. It still leaves to the County and Borough Councils the impossible choice between unconditional outdoor relief, which may easily induce a ruinous voluntary pauperism, and what Mr. and Mrs. Webb, on the experience of a century's history, deliberately and roughly call the "no less demoralizing and much more hateful Workhouse System." That is a dilemma which does nothing to meet the problem. It means that unemployment policy will continue to be a haphazard and chaotic sequence of relief works, special grants, juggling with insurance, departmental laxity about outdoor relief in times of acute pressure—and all this, especially if a Conservative government is in power, at the probable expense of a proper level of general social policy in matters like health and education and housing. A failure to develop national responsibility for the unemployed will be purchased by economy on the social services.

That, as Mr. and Mrs. Webb rightly insist, would be disastrous. They therefore urge, as it seems to me quite unanswerably, that what is required is a specialized national authority to deal with the problems of employment. They insist on the importance of: (1) the proper use of national credit to perform necessary public works in slack periods; (2) the compulsory notification of vacancies to the Labor Exchanges by employers; (3) the systematization of individual records now scattered in a dozen places; (4) a wholesale development of training for the unemployed; (5) a proper "sorting out" of the 50,000 "vagrants" who are now simply casual tenants night after night of different workhouse wards; (6) the removal of the stigma of pauperism from the wives or children of the wageless by treating them through the local health and education authorities upon whom their care should properly devolve. All this, as they show, implies a great development of the nature and functions of the Minister of Labor and the correlation of local councils themselves. What is, in fact, growing up beneath our eyes is a new conception of social relationships. That may be best expressed by saying that it is now admittedly necessary to use the machinery of the State deliberately to mitigate the results of social inequality. In the last hundred years we have been driven, piecemeal, to abandon the idea that poverty is a part of nature, or that it must be regarded as a proof of original sin. Here I only draw attention to Mr. and Mrs. Webb's emphatic inference that the dictatorship of the proletariat, with all its grim consequences, arises naturally in the society from which economic security for the masses is absent.

I can imagine few more fascinating books than one which would seek to apply the lesson of these volumes to American experience. There, as in England, the problem has become a definitely national one; state boundaries have no meaning where the economic market is coterminous with the whole population. As in England, it would, I think, be discovered that neither regional nor voluntary relief has any final value; that what is called for is a revision of the Constitution. America confronts this problem with possibilities of constructive innovation far greater than England has been able to make. In learning from our mistakes, she might teach us the need for experiments we are as yet unwilling to imagine.

I have emphasized here one aspect only of Mr. and Mrs. Webb's book. Let me add in conclusion that it is as invaluable to the student of political science as it is to the historian and the economist. It will show him his principles in the making with an amplitude of administrative illustration, the value of which cannot be overemphasized. In the thousand pages of these volumes I have found little (least of all in the extracts from Mrs. Webb's diary) that has not seemed to me essential. If the book is not written with the gay brilliance of Maitland (who else could so write?), it is in the best sense the work of two great humanists. *Finis coronat opus.* It is of few that it can be said as of Mr. and Mrs. Webb that they have remade by their learning and their insight the categories of social thought in their time.

HAROLD J. LASKI.

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A Peasant and a General's Daughter

The Road, by André Chamson. Translated from the French by Van Wyck Brooks. With a Foreword by Ernest Boyd. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.

The Case for the Defendant, by Hans Aufricht-Ruda. Translated from the German by Bernard Miall. With an Afterword by Jacob Wassermann. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

ANDRE CHAMSON and Hans Aufricht-Ruda are both young men, but their books are happily free from the purely personal tone of most of our young novelists in this country. Chamson has applied his imagination to the life-span of a pair of simple folk in the Cévennes; Aufricht-Ruda to a neurotic young girl and a wrongly accused lieutenant, who were the principals, in 1834, in one of France's most famous trials of the nineteenth century. But both write a simple, moving prose that conveys a depth of feeling less by its vocabulary than by the force of what is told.

The hero of Chamson's tale is a peasant, named Combes, who lived on a little farm of "stones and cropped grass" in the hills above Saint-André. When the new road was put through, he worked on it, with the satisfaction of a strong man, who feels the sweat break out of him in the sun, stretches his tired muscles at evening, and sees the road lengthen as the result of his labor. But the road went up the other side of the valley from his farm; and his wife, Anna, insisted that they should move down into the village. There they brought up their son, while Anna fretted because their neighbors had better things than they had or because they were not getting rich fast enough. Combes became a gardener, refused to worry, and spent his Sundays in the hills on his abandoned farm. Eventually their son became a teacher in a near-by village, Anna fretted herself into the grave, and we last see Combes, as an old man, happily climbing the road he had helped to make in his youth. As he disappears into one of the creases in the hills, stirred by the beauty of the day, he becomes almost a mythological figure of that mood that the rest of us know only at long intervals: an unquestioning, vigorous satisfaction in the mere flow of blood in the veins: the rise and fall of animal life.

"The Case for the Defendant" is based on an actual incident, of the kind that today makes the living of psychoanalysts, in which the flow of animal life has been dammed up. Marie Morell was the daughter of the commandant of the artillery school at Saumur, in France. Having been educated in a convent she returned home at the age of seventeen, apparently a sweet, naïve girl, to play hostess to the group of young officers stationed under her father. Among these was Lieutenant de la Roncière, thirteen years older than herself, known as a dissipated and contentious officer, unpopular among his colleagues and notoriously familiar with the local prostitutes.

Marie's erotic fancies, overheated perhaps in the convent atmosphere and stimulated by la Roncière's reputation, fastened on him. But, unfortunately, the lieutenant treated her with deference, as his general's daughter. Failing to arouse his interest, she forged a series of notes to herself, in his handwriting, threatening herself in gross language with violence and disgrace. Having thus stirred up a fine hornet's nest, she then staged the sequel that had been promised in the notes: she was found one morning lying naked on the floor in her bedroom, bound from head to foot with cord. She accused la Roncière of having forced his way into her room and assaulted her in a frenzy of lust. La Roncière was arrested and brought to trial in Paris, where he was defended by the most famous lawyer of that day. Due largely to his own refusal to establish his alibi and to the opinion of the handwriting experts, who were taken in by Marie's skill, la Roncière was sentenced to ten years in prison, and he served eight of them before Marie's confession that she had written the notes and inflicted the wounds on herself, rehabilitated him.

Aufricht-Ruda has used this sensational material with restraint and imagination. He tells his story with no explanations except those that are implicit, no theorizing, no psychoanalytical jargon. The two people he has created are probably very different from the two that actually took part in that horrible affair; but we recognize them both as real. And, by the delicacy and sympathy of the observation, the story even ceases to be horrible and becomes humanly pathetic.

LAWRENCE S. MORRIS.

A Living Death

The Outpost of the Lost, by General David L. Brainard. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 317 pages. $3.

THERE have been so many books about Arctic exploration during the past year, so many defenses and so many recriminations, that it is a relief to read this simple and untouched diary of General Brainard, kept during the retreat of the Greely expedition from the northwest coast of Greenland in 1883.

General Greely's command of twenty-four men, including General, then Sergeant, Brainard, had started off with high hopes in the summer of 1881, expecting to remain in the Arctic one, or at the most, two years. Two years later, in August, 1883, with no signs of rescue at hand, they decided to start south by open boat and sledge. Leaving the comparative comfort of their wooden Fort Conger, they made their way by incredible exertion to the northern extremity of Baffin Bay. There, encamped on a desolate shore, they awaited aid. None came, and one by one they died of starvation until only seven were left. These were saved at the very last possible moment, when they were all practically unconscious and unable to move, and one, already horribly mutilated, died shortly afterwards.

Until his fingers were too weak to hold a pencil Sergeant Brainard kept a faithful record of each day's events. His language is restrained and yet so graphic that each character in the tragedy, each event in that hopeless Arctic vigil, stands before the reader's eyes a reality. It was a triumph of the mind that the fiction of army regulations could be kept up to the end. Dying men were mustered out and reënlisted at the proper dates; some promoted; one shot for stealing food. Their courage never failed. Yet who could blame them for becoming almost insensible to suffering and death? Men reduced to eating microscopic shrimps—it took 700 to make an ounce—were beyond caring what happened. It is interesting to know that members of the Greely expedition were accused of cannibalism, but of this the book makes no mention. After reading this grim narrative one is inclined to ask again, Who could blame them if the charges were true? It is evident that the survivors largely owed their rescue to the unselfish and untiring efforts of the author, who suppressed his story for nearly fifty years.

NEILSON ABEEL.

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Beaver, Gold and Railroads

The Road to Oregon, by W. J. Ghent. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 273 pages. $5.

Trails, Rails and War, by J. R. Perkins. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 371 pages. $5.

John Jacob Astor, by A. D. H. Smith. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 295 pages. $3.50.

Eilley Orrum, by Swift Paine. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 309 pages. $3.

THE first three books listed above present a comprehensive and well documented survey of the great western immigration which took the Yankee on his long, long walk from the Mississippi to the Pacific. "The Road to Oregon" is the best thing of its kind that has yet been published, and is an indispensable introduction to the epic of the covered wagon. "Trails, Rails and War" is a biography of General Grenville Dodge who, as construction engineer, was the hammer-head for the Union Pacific in its pioneer thrust across the prairies toward the west coast. He is among the foremost of America's great men of action. The Astor biography will please all those readers who like modern jazzed-up journalistic studies of famous individuals. In connection with the life of Dodge it fills out and gives detail and color to the outlines laid down in "The Road to Oregon." The story of Eilley Orrum, eccentric Queen of the Comstock, is so badly and so sketchily written that the reader gets only the faintest rumor of what may be a most engaging story of the mining frontier.

Mr. Ghent has skillfully assembled his material concerning the Oregon Trail, and the many reproductions of old contemporary prints add particular interest to the book. Starting with the first hard-boiled trappers who pushed out into the uncharted deserts and mountains, it covers the journey of the first scattered wagon trains, the Mormon immigration and the final gold rush after '49.

"Trails, Rails and War" is a straight-ahead, matter-of-fact recital of the events of a man's life. General Dodge is so much a part of the first western railroad-building that his history is the history of the organization and construction of the Union Pacific. The chapters on his part in the Civil War under Grant form an interesting sidelight on the engineering problems of the war. Nowhere is the battle of early industrialism between the builders like Dodge and the stock-jobbers like Thomas C. Durant and Jim Fiske better exemplified than in the history of this railroad. Strangely enough, all that Dodge has to say of his relationship with Jay Gould is greatly in favor of that maligned character. Dodge had, first and last, a single-track mind, obsessed with the idea of pushing iron tracks across the desert and mountains. He did this in spite of continual Indian warfare at the actual front and the bickerings and trickery of speculative financiers behind his back.

Superficially Smith's book on Astor is more entertaining to read than the life of Dodge. Unfortunately, Mr. Smith has the Svengali touch of the puppet master. He is the perfect journalist whose reader shall not yawn nor be given breath to make his own judgments. One can hear the shout from the City Desk: "More color! More color!" Nevertheless, after these unmannerly remarks, it is fair to add that the great drama of the fur trade and the colonizing of Oregon is skillfully laid bare in following Astor's career.

HENRY CHAPIN.

Images of War

This Man's Army: A War in Fifty-odd Sonnets, by John Allan Wyeth. New York: Harold Vinal. 60 pages. $2.

Mountain against Mountain, by Arthur Davison Ficke. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 100 pages. $1.50.

THE War is over: the war is begun. Mr. Wyeth, in a collection of sonnets, and Mr. Ficke, in a long and unequal introductory poem in a variety of rhythmical patterns, have tried to revive images of war. Both attempts have resulted in thin poetry, but it has been the achievement of Mr. Wyeth to make the thinness of his sonnets of more interest than that of Mr. Ficke's poem. In each, one finds a variety of matter and of observation, but the impact is weak. Both Mr. Ficke and Mr. Wyeth utilize disconnected incidents much in the same way they are used in Mr. Hemingway's novel, "In Our Time," but the bluntness of assertion and sharpness of outline which made Mr. Hemingway's one- or two-paragraph chapters alive with significance are absent from these poems. Mr. Wyeth's sonnets often achieve a sharp outline in one line, but the effect is dissipated by what follows. His utilization of stray tags of songs popular during the War, of *argot* and of slang is largely responsible for the sense of novelty he has managed to inject into the sonnet form. As for Mr. Ficke's book, one must resort to certain lyrics in the style already widely known to find substance for enthusiasm.

R. E. L.

Fiction Notes

Judith Silver, by Hector Bolitho. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

JAMES and Simon Grantham, father and son, are members of the British professional class. Obviously living upon an income inherited from some vague ancestor, they have no more responsibility to society than have the once-popular ladies and gentlemen who committed suicide at the commands of Michael Arlen. Even though the Granthams are imported to England from New Zealand, they are stamped with the characteristics of Mayfair. Despite a habit on the part of Mr. Bolitho to tell you about his people rather than let you see them in action, the relationship between father and son does convey an impression of horror. The picture of a beautiful boy of fourteen, clad in a silk shirt and mercilessly flogged by his father, is not easily forgotten. Soon after this episode, the father is sent to an asylum. Years afterward, he is released and sent on to his son, then an undergraduate at Cambridge. The son falls in love with a spiritually pure and beautiful opera star, Judith Silver, in whom you cannot quite believe, even when she reforms a roué on his death-bed. However, Judith is the symbol of a normal life that rescues young Simon from the influences surrounding his father, a symbol of spiritual victory over and above the forces of evil. If "Judith Silver" were an exception to the general tendencies of contemporary British fiction, the book could be considered as an individual and self-conscious piece of work, supported by a well knit, distinctive prose style. But since there are many young novelists today writing from the same general point of view, Mr. Bolitho's book is scarcely more than another footnote implying criticism of a receding culture.

H. G.

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Hobby House, by Russell Neale. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

HERE is a short story expanded with some difficulty to the required number of pages for the purpose of making a book. It is direct and simple. William, the son of Charles Stiffey, the burgess of Baker's Landing on the Ohio River, falls in love with and marries the daughter of Cap Ira, who lives by floating a houseboat up and down the Ohio. The burgess never forgives his son for marrying a poor white, not even when a sentimental appeal is made in the person of a baby grandson. Young William is left to work out his own salvation with his wife, Julee, and a job of laying ties on the railroad. You see at once that this is the sort of thing that is often used in motion pictures, that here is an opportunity for tears and laughter. But even though "Hobby House" is marred by "love interest" and movie technique, Russell Neale bears watching. There is every indication that he has the ability to present an accurate cross-section of Middle-Western American life. H. G.

Belinda, by Hilaire Belloc. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

WITHOUT losing any of the superior sophistication which is the heritage of our age, Hilaire Belloc gives us a little cameo, rose-tinted and finely cut, on which is etched the story of the delicate love of Belinda and Horatio, children of post-Napoleon England. It is the same type of art which is employed by Christopher Morley on the stage at Hoboken, and, as there, we are expected to smile, not guffaw. For here we are for the first time, artistically speaking, in a friendly mood with Victorianism, in sympathy rather than out of it. Indeed, we not only smile tolerantly, but wonder, before we have finished reading the lines of the cameo, whether there was not something priceless about it all. It is a literary whim on the part of Mr. Belloc, as "After Dark" is a whim on the part of Mr. Morley, but it has opened one more channel of exploitation of the nineteenth century, which, needless to say, is more pleasant sailing to the romanticist than the satires of Mr. Strachey. A. H. O.

Contributors

DONALD R. RICHBERG is a well known Chicago lawyer, closely associated with progressive political movements. He has been since 1923 general counsel for the National Conference on Valuation of Railways. In the O'Fallon case, the United States Senate shattered precedent by asking the Supreme Court to hear Mr. Richberg as a "friend of the court," which was granted, and in which capacity he was allowed to participate in the oral and written arguments.

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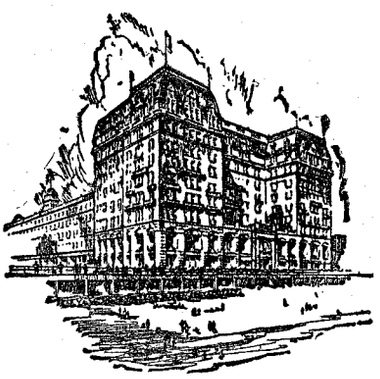

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